REASON AND REVELATION

Gopi Krishna

One flash of genius or one instant beam
Of Revelation, like a vanished dream,
Heaps of pedantic dross can melt away
And thought of centuries change in a day.

About the author:

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The Real Nature of Mystical Experience
Kundalini in Time and Space
The Shape of Events to Come
Reason and Revelation

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AND
REVELATION

Gopi Krishna

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1

REASON AND THE IDEA OF GOD

The greatest riddle in front of every intelligent human being is why we are here? Where-from we have come and what is the purpose of our life? All religions, all systems of philosophy and all speculations of scientists about the origin and meaning of life or the origin and meaning of the universe revolve round these few simple questions.

From the time man began to think, he has been pondering over these issues and trying to find an answer to the problem posed by his own existence. But in spite of the present vast increase in our knowledge, we have not come any nearer to the truth. It can be that the answer is quite simple, which our own restless reason complicates.

When we deeply ponder on our own being, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the mystery surrounding us is the greatest challenge to our existence, though we often fail to realize it. In fact, to be frank, from his birth to death, intelligent man seems to be operating under the

influence of a narcotic that keeps him bound to the wheel of life without allowing him to think about himself, and be free of the cloud that keeps his own identity always hidden from him. This is true not only of the common run of human beings, but of erudite scholars and great philosophers also. They do not know the least about themselves, whence they came and who they are, yet day and night they are so busy, each in his own way, that often they have no time to ponder over their own problem.

The libraries of the world are filled with labourious products of thousands of outstanding intellects who dedicated their lives to find solutions to the problems ranging from the tilling of soil to the construction of space rockets, but not one of them was able to solve his own mystery. The only class of human beings whose answers to the riddle have been most widely accepted by mankind have been the founders of major faiths, a few great sages and mystics who all can be grouped under the title of the Enlightened. But their answers, too, do not provide real solutions to the great mystery. The reason is that what they have said about the origin and nature of man and the world he lives in have to be accepted on faith, and made an integral part of one's thinking without verification.

Besides this, there are many inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the revealed scriptures of mankind. On this account a doubt is cast even over those portions of them which deal with transcendental realities and which

we are not able to verify. True, there have been prophets, sages, yogis, Sufis, mystics, and other enlightened men and women who claim to have experienced God or Brahman or Allah or Vishnu or Jehova in their ecstacies or to have held converse and communion with Him, but all these experiences of divinity or of the soul or of angels or other celestial beings have always been purely subjective and there never has been any possibility to demonstrate their existence to the world at large.

The position, therefore, remains the same. All information we have of the other world, of God or soul has always been taken on trust. There has existed no possilility to verify it. In order to determine how far the statements have been true, the position has been further complicated by the fact that these accounts of the illuminated class do not often agree with each other. They are so full of exaggerations, contradictions and, not unoften, incredible narratives that it is extremely difficult to frame a firm opinion about the truth of what is stated to pass a verdict that all that has been said is correct and needs no further proof to carry conviction to everyone.

For the religious-minded there is abundant material in the religious and mystical literature of the world to confirm their belief in the tenants of a faith, in the existence of God and the soul and the possibility of union between the two or of salvation for the latter. On the other side, there is also ample material for the skeptic to

brush aside the shaky evidence or to point out the incongruities and to remain unconvinced about the issue, For instance, if we turn to Bertrand Russell, his view is,

> "I do not pretend to be able to prove that there is no God. I equally cannot prove that Satan is a fiction. The Christian God may exist; so may the Gods of Olympus, or of ancient Egypt, or of Babylon. But no one of these hypotheses is more probable than any other: they lie outside the region of even probable knowledge, and therefore there is no reason to consider any of them."[1]

There is much to say about what Russell is hinting at. Our mind can conceive what is finite. Whatever concept of Divinity is framed by us now or might be framed in the future, must lie within the periphery of the intellect. Considering the dimensions and the duration of the universe, as revealed by astronomical study in our time, it is futile to expect that the First Cause of such a stupendous creation can ever be apprehended by the human mind. This is what Dostoevsky hints at when he says,

> "If God exists and if He really did create the world, then, as we all know, He created it according to the geometry of Euclid and the human mind with the conception of only three dimensions in space. Yet there have been and still are geometricians and philosophers, and even some of the most distinguished, who doubt whether the whole universe,

> or to speak more widely, the whole of being, was only created in Euclid's geometry; they even dare to dream that two parallel lines, which according to Euclid can never meet on earth, may meet somewhere in infinity. I have come to the conclusion that, since I can't understand even that, I can't expect to understand about God. I acknowledge humbly that I have no faculty for settling such questions, I have a Euclidian earthly mind, and how could I solve problems that are not of this world?"[2]

For the philosopher, Kant, God is a moral certainty and not a product of reason. He says,

> "While all the ambitious attempts of reason to penetrate beyond the limits of experience end in disappointment, there is still enough left to satisfy us in a practical point of view. No one, it is true, will be able to boast that he knows that there is a God and a future life; for, if he knows this, he is just the man whom I have long wished to find. All knowledge, regarding an object of mere reason, can be communicated; and I should thus be enabled to hope that my own knowledge would receive this wonderful extension, through the instrumentality of his instruction. No, my conviction is not logical, but moral certainty; and since it rests on subjective grounds (of the moral sentiment), I must not even say: It is morally certain that there is a God, etc., but: I am morally certain, that is, my belief in God and in

another world is so interwoven with my moral nature that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter."[3]

This moral feeling about the existence of God is not universal. Nor is it equally pronounced in all human beings. There are many who are inherently skeptical with an inborn tendency to reject the supernatural and the Divine. We do not know the reason for this diversity in human nature. Why there are some with an overwhelming innate conviction about the existence of God, which no logic can efface, and some that do not have this strength of conviction or only to a moderate degree is inexplicable to us, because we still lack in adequate knowledge of the brain. If we know that the human cortex is still evolving an explanation for this variation would not be hard to find. There must be something in the psychological makeup of human beings to account for the existence of the idea of God or its absence. In the words of Voltaire,

"The theist is a man firmly persuaded of the existence of a Supreme Being as good as He is powerful, who has formed all beings with extension, vegetating, sentient and reflecting; who perpetuates their species, who punishes crimes without cruelty, and rewards virtuous actions with kindness."

"The theist does not know how God punishes, how he protects, how he pardons, for he is not reckless enough to flatter himself that he knows how God

acts, but he knows that God acts and that He is just. Difficulties against Providence do not shake him in his faith, because they are merely great difficulties, and not proofs. He submits to this Providence, although he perceives but a few effects and few signs of this Providence: and, judging of the things he does not see by the things he sees, he considers that this Providence reaches all places and all centuries."[4]

For Locke, the order and the wisdom observed in the universe provide sufficient evidence for the existence of a Creator. "The visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the Creation," he writes, "that a rational creature who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a Diety."[5] But, strangely enough, it is the rationalists in our day who are vehemently against the concepts of faith. It is an interesting exercise to see how the ideas of scholars about the same phenomenon change from age to age.

For Spinoza, the very existence of the Universe is proof for the existence of God. "God and all His attributes are eternal," he says, "that is to say, each one of His attributes expresses existence. The same attributes of God, therefore, which manifest the eternal essence of God, at the same time manifest His eternal existence."[6]

Bertrand Russell rejects the argument that the very nature of existence makes it necessary that there should be a First Cause on the ground that if it is necessary to

assume a First Cause, then there must be a Cause for that First Cause also. We need not enter into these philosophical subtleties. Our aim in presenting a few samples about the thinking of great scholars or scientists on the issue of God is only to show the diversity of views that exist on the subject and the role reason has played in this diversity.

Hobbes argues that,

> "Those philosophers who said the world, or the soul of the world, was God spake unworthily of Him, and denied His existence: for by God is understood the cause of the world; and to say the world is God is to say there is no cause of it, that is, no God..."[7]

It is interesting to note here Descartes' answer to the problem of diversity of views about God.

> "When you say how strange it is that other men do not think about God in the same way as I do, when He has impressed the idea of Himself on them exactly as on me, it is precisely as if you were to marvel that since all are acquainted with the idea of a triangle, they do not all perceive an equal number of truths about it, and some probably reason about this very figure incorrectly."[8]

2

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT RELIGION

As in the case of ordinary human beings the great thinker or philosopher, too, is vastly influenced in his expressions by his own inner feelings concerning the existence or otherwise of divinity. There are individuals who, though intellectually as high and analytical as a distinguished philosopher, often lack the ability to crystalize their ideas into language and put them down on paper like the latter. I have known people whose wisdom and logic was as high as that of a great, widely known thinker, but who yet remained unknown and unsought after as they lacked the skill to make their ideas accessible to the others in a readable form.

It is often a habit with facile writers to suppose that they are, in some way, superior to those who do not possess this ability to wield a pen. Sometimes this effluvium of conceit penetrates through the writings of popular authors, newspaper columnists and widely

known thinkers like a powerful stench. Even a child's prattle is a profound mystery to a humble intellect. It is said of the great philosopher, Shankaracharya; a Brahmin by birth, that one morning, when he was on the way to a temple accompanied by his disciples, after a bath in the Ganges, an out-caste passing the same way came so close as to be almost within touching distance from him. The out-caste was carrying a pot of liquor on his head and was followed by dogs. Shankara shrinking from his touch asked him to keep away.

The man retorted, "Whom do you bid to keep away, the soul or the body?" The cardinal point of Shankara's philosophy is that the Soul or Atman is Brahman and every human being is a glow coming from the Splendour of the Absolute. The answer opened the eyes of Shankara and he realized that the person in the guise of the out-caste was none other than the Lord of Creation come to teach him a profound spiritual truth. Shankara refers to this episode in "Maneesha Panchakam", where the refrain of the song is, "Salution to Him who comes as the Teacher in the Shape of the out-caste as well as that of the twice-born" (i.e. a person of a higher caste.)[9]

"Neither acquiescence in skepticism nor acquiescence in dogma," says Bertrand Russell, "is what education should produce. What it should produce is a belief that knowledge is attainable in a measure, though with difficulty; that much of what passes for knowledge at any given time is likely to be more or less mistaken, but that

the mistakes can be rectified by care and industry..."[10]

But do the philosophers act on their own axioms? If one were to ask the question whether in the light of the evidence presented by the unanimity in the avowals of mystics of all ages and climes, as acknowledged by him, Russell was justified in rejecting the voluminous testimony provided by mystical experience, in support of a Spiritual Reality behind the universe, as an emotional and not a rational response to the experience is right? Here we come again to the same problem of the tremendous influence our inherent predispositions have upon our thought.

Similarly do the words of Freud that, "If one regards oneself as a skeptic, it is well from time to time to be skeptical about one's skepticism," justify his tirades against religious belief? "If one attempts to assign to religion its place in man's evolution", he writes, "it seems not so much to be a lasting acquisition, as a parallel to the neurosis which the civilized individual must pass through on his way from childhood to maturity."[11]

Had Freud an inkling of the fact that "neuroses" are not purely psychic affections, but the result of subtle organic poisons acting on the Pranic spectrum, beyond the probe of science at this stage, his attitude to religion would have been entirely different. "Neuroses" and "psychoses" are nature's punitive measures to keep mortals on the path of evolution with the threat of a psychic disorder in the event

of transgressions in the same way as a physical disease is a punitive measure to check abuse of the body by over-indulgence or denial or by adoption of a wrong, unhygienic way of life.

At another place Freud writes:

> "The ordinary man cannot imagine this Providence in any other form but that of a greatly exalted father, for only such a one could understand the needs of the sons of men, or be softened by their prayers and placated by the signs of their remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so incongruous with reality, that to one, whose attitude to humanity is friendly, it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life."[12]

How ill this accords with Freud's own counsel that 'one should be skeptical about one's own skepticism' is obvious. Either his study of religious experience and mystical ecstasy was too superficial or his own egotistical idea, that the psychoanalytical doctrines represented the last word in the knowledge of mind, must have led him to this summary dismissal of a phenomenon as important for human happiness and survival as the law of gravity is for the integrity and existence of the cosmos.

There are shortcomings and faults in all religions as also in the revealed testaments of their founders, but these faults have been mostly due to the same egotism, dogma and pride of the intellect that are as clearly

marked in philosophic and scientific thinking also. These defects have led many great thinkers to raise their voices against dogmatic faith without knowing that their own thinking was coloured by the same faults which they pointed out in others. In the words of James, "The pivot round which the religious life, as we have traced it, revolves, is the interest of the individual in his private personal destiny. Religion, in short, is a monumental chapter in the history of human egotism."[13]

Egotism has not always been the dominant factor in religion. The conclusion is not consistent with the history of all great religions—the heroic battles fought, the sacrifices made, the persecutions endured and the martyrdom suffered for the sake of a new spiritual outlook that contained the germs of nobility, truth, compassion, peace, love and brotherhood in the form of a creed for everyone who cared to embrace it. It is not the principles of religions that have been at fault or the pioneers who dedicated their lives to establish them. The dark stains have come from egotistical, power-hungry, proud, fanatical and selfish hierarchies which usurped for themselves the position of intermediaries between the followers and their God. But these blots are not peculiar to faith alone. They profane every sphere of human thought and deed. Philosophy, literature, art, and science have as much suffered from the depredations of this class of individuals as religion. Therefore, one cannot blame the other.

Emerson is nearer the mark when he says:

> "Religion among the low becomes low. As it loses its truth, it loses credit with the sagacious. They detect the falsehood of the preaching, but when they say so, all good citizens cry, Hush; do not weaken the State, do not take off the straitjacket from dangerous persons. Every honest fellow must keep up the hoax the best he can; must patronize providence and piety, and wherever he sees anything that wil keep men amused, schools or churches or poetry or picture-gallaries or music, or what not, he must cry 'Hist-a-boy,' and urge the game on. What a compliment we pay to the good SPIRIT with our super-serviceable zeal!"[14]

Both the advocates and the opponents of religion often give expression only to their own feelings about it. The arguments used only help to express the feeling in a logical way. Like a bird picking up crumbs of bread from a gravel bed, the believers pick up only those facts which support their logic and the skeptics those which defend theirs.

But what is actually the core or the central point of the religious impulse in human beings? In answering this question, we have to keep in view the many stages through which religion has passed from its first expression in the mind of the savage to the present day. We have to start with the holy and the profane of the primitives, the totem and taboo, the magic and super-

naturalism of the shaman and the witchdoctor, then come to the gods of Egyptians, Indo-Aryans, Greeks and Romans, thence to the pantheism of the Upanishads, monotheism of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, until we reach the era of reason in which we live at present.

It will not help us in our search if we uphold the merits or demerits of one faith as compared to the other or argue that all faiths are one, or dismiss the whole structure as a creation of human fancy or as a need imposed by his society on man. For instance, let us give a little thought to these words of Karl Marx:

> "The foundation of irreligious criticism is man: man makes religion; religion does not make man. Religion is, in fact, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet gained himself or has lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion, which is an inverted world-consciousness, because they are an inverted world. Religion is the general theory of this world... Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."[15]

How have we come to the conclusion that religion is a fabrication of the human mind and not an instinctive impulse embedded deep in it? If society could produce religion then the history of various faiths would not be

what it has been all along — a dynamic effort launched for the revision of current ways of life, habits, customs and credal beliefs by a single inspired founder often in the face of stiff opposition and persecution from the great bulk of the society.

Uncritical acceptance of religions, down to their myths, on the one side and dogmatic disbelief on the other, need not cause surprise to an honest observer. Both these attitudes are a part of human nature. They do not affect the intrinsic value of faith. Thus John Stuart Mill says about religion that, "Every established fact which is too bad to admit of any other defence, is always presented to us as an injuction of religion."[16] And according to Ruskin, "To make your children capable of honesty is the beginning of education. Make them men first, and religious men afterwards, and all will be sound; but a knave's religion is always the rottenest thing about him."[17]

It is clear that the concern of thinkers and philosophers has been with the merits or demerits of religion in which they were born and bred. Only a few of them, perhaps, had as thorough a knowledge of other faiths and creeds or of their metaphysics as they had of their own. It is not unoften that one's own religion occupies the whole mental horizon of a scholar to the exclusion of other parts of the sky which are completely shut out from his view. Each of the four great faiths of mankind, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam have hundreds of

million adherents convinced about the excellence of their own faith.

It can never be possible to judge between them as each has excellent merits and also demerits both. The merits of one can appeal to one group of observers and the merits of the other to another group. Hence there is no possibility to bring the "seesaw" of religious controversy to a balanced position. So long as the real nature of the religious impulse is not located, and the law ruling its manifestation and multi-lateral expression in human beings, from the dawn of reason to this day, is not discovered, religion will continue to be a controversial riddle for all time to come.

Most people on the earth profess a religion without knowing why they do so. They believe in God, in life after death, in the immortality of the soul without caring to investigate on what evidence does their belief rest. Most of them profess these beliefs as they are inculcated in the scriptures of their faith or because most of the people in their society have faith in them. There is a religious organization in their country with churches, priests and other ecclesiastical dignitaries. There are rituals and observances they have to perform, conventions they have to follow and the beliefs they have to hold in order to conform to the faith they profess.

If we analyze further on what these beliefs, observations, conventions and rituals rest, we will find that the ultimate source is a book or a number of books of a

remote origin which are said to contain the inspired expressions and utterances of the prophets or sages who founded the faith. There is no authority anterior to them. It can well be that these prophets or sages incorporated in their own productions some of the beliefs or observances coming from the past which, too, were held sacred and authentic in their time. The ideas and the experiences of these founding prophets and sages of the current faiths were confirmed, from time to time, by other saints and sages who claimed to have the same experiences as the founders. They exalted their name, extolled their written words, and lent strong support to their ideas and teachings, in this way adding more and more to the authority and the prestige of the scriptural lore.

In spite of all this din and noise about religion, its tremendous hold on populations, its magnificence and show, its wealth and possessions, its armies of dedicated missionaries, its preachers and priests, its controversies and conflicts and its voluminous record of thousands of years, mankind is still unaware of the base of this mighty edifice that has stood the onslaught of time and outlived mighty kingdoms and cultures that flourished during the past thousands of years. There is no awareness either amoung the religious-minded or the skeptics that, like philosophy and science, which have their roots in the rational sense in man, religion and its miracles owe their origin to another nascent faculty. This supersense will rise above reason and the senses by which it is fed, to

reach higher levels of creation and to win control of subtle forces, manifested in psychic phenomena, which baffle all our efforts to solve their mystery.

The bulk of mankind has a religion of some kind. By far the greater part of this majority is born in families that have a religion. They are exposed to the religious beliefs of the family from a very early age, participate in the ceremonies and rituals and, in later life, are often deeply coloured by the ideas and the beliefs entertained by their parents, their kith and kin and the people in their surroundings. This helps to plant the seed of religion in many minds at a time when they are most plastic with the result that the creed of childhood often becomes an inalienable part of their personality in later life.

Religion has been a part of human life from as far back as there is history. If we carefully survey the position, as it has existed during the last about 20,000 years, we find clear evidence to show that religious ideas of mankind have evolved in the same way as the intellect. No creed or set of beliefs entertained in the distant past became universal or continued to hold a place in the mind of man for all the period. Religious ideas and beliefs change in the same way as ideas and beliefs about the physical world and its laws have been changing from time to time since the beginning of science from the Egyptian and Vedic times. The idea of some thinkers, including Russell, that science began with the Greeks, needs revision. It has been discovered now that Greeks bor-

rowed lavishly from the Egyptian store of knowledge. The achievements in India in the sphere of science,if not anterior, ran parallel to those of Egypt.

A strange conflict has arisen in our time. Certain generally accepted theories and discoveries of science have shaken some of the explanations contained in the religious lore of various faiths about the origin and the nature of the universe. Side by side, the triumph of materialistic political ideologies in Russia and China has contributed a great deal to shake the common belief that an atheistical or heretical frame of mind can prove disastrous in this life and lead to damnation in the hereafter. The achievements of modern science — its control over disease, conquest over distance, increase in the span of life, victory over drought and famine and its marvels of technology have created a revolution in the thinking of the race. The threats of dire misfortune, hell-fire or perpetual damnation held out by the priestly custodians of various faiths have lost their terror. Although there yet are credulous segments for whom these threats and terrors still continue to have some force, the critical intelligent mind is now almost free of these awesome shadows of religious life.

3

THE CHILD'S MIND — A MIRROR OF THE FUTURE

The religious impulse is ingrained in the very texture of reason. Our very attempt to find explanations for the phenomena of nature and an answer to the riddle of our own existence is a part of our rational endowment. But in the latter case, the objects of search are beyond the range of our senses and, therefore, ungraspable by the intellect. The spirit of enquiry is, generally speaking, more manifest in the intelligent mind. Almost every man, who can think and reason, wants to find a solution to the mystery of his own self as also of the universe and his own relationship to the creation he sees around.

The instinct is active even in children, sometimes, from an astonishingly early age. They dumbfound their parents with profound questions about the problems of existence that come to their mind. I have seen parents speechless with amazement at the questions of precocious children so grave that one could never imagine

that, at that age, a child would have the perspicuity to ask them. Sometimes the children, too, do not themselves understand the magnitude of the problems of which they seek the solutions. The questions rise spontaneously from the profound depths of the psyche, as if planted by nature in the form of an urge waiting to be satisfied at the appointed time.

This curiosity in children, starting from the early age of seven or eight years, sometimes, even earlier, raises a problem that has never been satisfactorily answered so far. "Wonder", according to Socrates, "is the feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder."[18] But why is this sense of wonder so deeply ingrained in the mind of a child? And why should the problems of creation agitate a child's mind, when it is being looked after and cared for by the parents? Why should it seek a father in heaven (the explanation of Freud) when its own father is alive and kicking? From which source does this wonder and curiosity spring so strongly that they make the life of great scholars, philosophers, poets, writers, scientists, theologians, prophets, mystics and artists one long drawn sacrifice in the quest of knowledge, truth, beauty, melody, symmetry, God, soul, the secrets of nature or the laws of life? Why are curiosity and wonder so dominant a part of human life? All science, philosophy, art and religion we possess is but a fragment of the harvest of this invisible seed.

"There is not so contemptible a plant or animal," says

Locke, "that does not confound the most enlarged understanding. Though the familiar use of things about us takes off our wonder, yet it cures not our ignorance."[5] Wonder is the source from which all of our knowledge has come. In the words of Santayana, "Each morning the sunrise excites wonder in the poet, and the order of the solar system excites it every night in the astronomer. Astronomy explains the sunrise, but what shall explain the solar system? The universe, which would explain everything, is the greatest of wonders, and a perpetual miracle."[19]

The mind of a child works in two directions. It tries to find explanations for what it observes around — the sky, sun, moon, stars, trees, mountains, water, boats, trains, television, airplanes and the rest. It fills its mind with the answers and explanations provided by parents or elders with whom it likes to converse. All the physical objects which excite its curiosity form only a part of the problems that rise in a child's mind. There are other questions, too. For instance, it would like to know, "Who has created the sun and the moon and the stars?"

"A child said," writes Whitman, " 'What is the grass?', fetching it to me with full hands. How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he."[20] If the family is religious, the child sometimes comes forward with the question, "What is God like?" "Where does He dwell?" "If he is high up in the sky, why can't we see Him?" And sometimes it asks, "Where have I

come from?" and "How can I meet God?" In the event of a death in the family, the child is curious to know about after-life and the destination of the departed soul. "Will he now dwell up in the sky?" it asks. This frame of mind of the child persists for years. If the environment is religious, its mind soon begins to dwell on the profundities of religion, on life and death, on soul, on immortality and on the existence of God.

In the adolescents, in whom the thirst is greater, the enquiry continues with fervour. Book after book, writer after writer, and philosopher after philosopher is studied. The scriptures are explored, the theories of scientists are examined, known experts and masters are consulted and the individual, still as thirsty as before, continues the search to the end. In the case of a genius, the lure of a natural subject of study and in the case of a mystic that of a supernatural object, rising as an uncontrollable impulse from the psyche, has been at the bottom of all achievements of the human mind both in the temporal and spiritual fields. We are still like children picking up pebbles on the shore of the unfathomed deep of our minds.

The harvest gathered in the pursuit of one part of this curiosity in the mind of the child is already before us in the great achievements of science and the colossal knowledge of the organic and inorganic worlds gained by man. The harvest of the other search, too, is before us, but so fragmentary, inconsistent, contradictory, and

dogmatic that, up to this day, it has not gained the hallmark of a universally accepted branch of knowledge that can meet the demand of our intellect and feeling both. The questions in our mind, "Who am I; what is the purpose of my life; what power has created the universe; and what would be my state after death?" still remain unanswered.

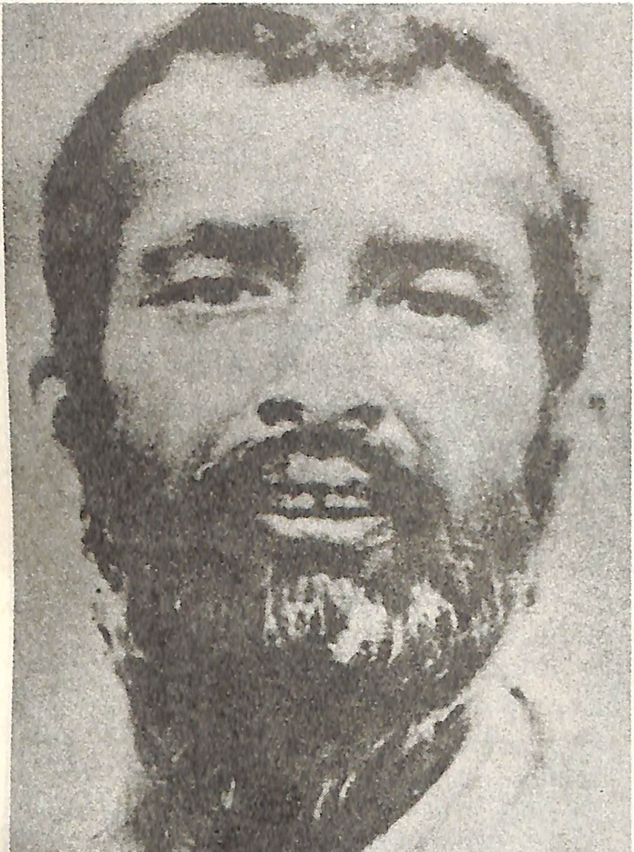
This whole body of questions, and more besides, begins to gain shape in the mind of the child and, when fully formed, agitates the mind of the adolescent and the adult in the same way as the phenomena of the objective world create a similar, though not identical, ferment in it. The fact that human effort has, in part, succeeded in answering these questions, the inference is irresistable that it will, one day, succeed in answering the other part of the enquiry, too, which starts to take form in the mind of the child and crystallizes in the mind of the adult into, "Who I am" and "What is this creation around me?". It is only a matter of time. We can safely presume, in this case, that the search of which the seeds have been planted in the mind of the child must have a purpose, though the learned might not have been able to know that purpose so far. In the pride of our superficial knowledge, we fail to understand the profound nature of this instinct. It is this ignorance of a great law of nature that is at the bottom of the present highly critical condition of the world.

"All animals feel Wonder, and many exhibit Curio-

sity" says Darwin. "They sometimes suffer from this latter quality."[21] But neither wonder nor curiosity in animals has led to that accumulation of knowledge and wisdom which man has achieved. The animal brain is a closed compartment with only a little room for extension from the area covered by its instinct. But in man, even when compared to the prehistoric primitive mind, the advance has been so amazing as could not be anticipated by even highly intelligent minds only two centuries ago. No scholar of our time has been able to solve this problem in a satisfactory way.

Animals have remained static for the last millions of years because the brain does not possess the flexibility for a performance beyond the limit already stamped on it by nature. If the same had been the case with man, he could not have progressed beyond a certain limit, determined by the brain, in his historical march from one level of intelligence to another. He could have remained stationery at the paleolithic or neolithic level and continued to stagnate there for all time to come. The sense of wonder and curiosity in him, in that case, could not have helped him to proceed even a few steps further, as is the case with animals. If this had happened, the earth, in our day, would be the abode of savage populations dwelling naked or semi-naked in crude shelters, using finely chiselled implements of stone for all their daily needs, and bows and arrows or spears, with flint heads, for their defence. It is because the organism of man has promptly

The ecstacy of St. Teresa, culminating in the spiritual exaltation she called the 'wound of love'



Sri Ramakrishna in a state of ecstacy

responded to his urge for invention and search for knowledge, and because the brain has co-operated readily in this effort that he has been able to bloom into the versatile intellectual of our time. If the brain had not been co-operative, he would have remained stuck at any one stage in his progress and no amount of resistance, on his part, could have been able to extricate him from it.

In the intoxication of our knowledge, we often ascribe the amazing achievements of the human intellect to our own effort, forgetting the fact that not only does the effort depend on the capacity of the brain, but also the possibility of its success. There are millions of retarded and deficient human minds to remind us that, but for some still unknown, inherent impulse, our brain, too, could have stopped to grow at some point in the past, resulting in a stunted species no better than the morons or the idiots we see around. We seldom show our awareness of this grace because, dominated by ego, we are prone to give credit to ourselves and not to the invisible power that shapes our body and the brain.

At the present stage of our knowledge our discussions on determinism or free-will are futile. We still do not know what is the relationship between our mind and the neuronic structure of the brain. How do they react and influence each other? How do we reason, calculate, imagine or dream? The basic facts about the mind are still an unsolved riddle to science. All our hypotheses, speculations, logic and fancies about the nature of mind

or soul are like the ideas expressed by infants about the moon and the stars, which undergo a radical change, when they grow sufficiently mature to study books on astronomy.

It is always good to remember that our body is the temple of the soul, used by divinity to manifest itself on the earth. It is beyond anything we can conceive of or reason about. It is a fragment of the Divine Substance which sustains the universe. It is a drop from the Ocean of the Absolute, an Atom from the world of Eternal Being. It is by the potentiality present in us because of our divine inheritance, that all our progress has become possible.

This Atom is immutable and everlasting, the Ground behind all the phenomena of nature. It is the same in the embryo, the infant, the child, the youth, the seasoned individual and the aged. It is the same in man and woman, in the high and the low, the mighty and the weak, the king and the beggar, the cheerful and the sad, the blind and those blessed with sight.

The brain of the child already contains seeds of its future life from adulthood to old age. "The Child is father of the Man"[22] says Wordsworth. It also contains the record of all the experiences through which the race has passed since the beginning of time. Scientists tell us that the genes have a store of memory which, if recorded in language, would require hundreds of volumes of hundreds of pages each. But what our scholars do not

concede yet is that the brain of the child contains a map of the future also — the territory he has to traverse, the path he has to tread and the destination he has to reach. It is for this reason that we are instinctively, drawn towards a child as the divine spark still fresh without the "shadowing cloud of ego and intellect that allows us to have glimpses of the divine light which illumines our existence". "This is the reason why, in the sight of every moral and sensible man, the child will always be a sacred thing;", writes Schiller, "I mean an object which, by the grandeur of an idea, reduces to nothingness all grandeur realized by experience; an object which, in spite of all it may lose in the judgement of the understanding, regains largely the advantage before the judgement of reason."[23]

The questions that surge up spontaneously in the mind of the child are the questions which the race has to learn to answer through the ages that still lie in front of her on the earth. They will be answered by every individual for himself sooner or later to wake up from the sleep of sensory experience which we call the world. Without this awakening, the whole drama of life is meaningless, in the same way as a dream, lasting for a century, would be meaningless, when the sleeper awakes to his own reality. In the words of Shakespeare, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."[24] Our life is rounded with slumber because we continue to sleep till death. The unanswered questions in our mind about ourselves are

intended to awaken us before our departure from earth to end the dream and make us aware of the amazing Reality.

It is the instinct of self-enquiry, the urge to know more about ourselves, about the meaning of our life and the universe round us which forms the basis for religion. There are countless people for whom this enquiry or this quest has such great importance that it outweighs all other issues connected with their life. Their search is endless. They often want to know how they should mould their lives to make this search easier and fruitful, what books they should read, what disciplines they should practice, what methods of meditation they should use and what behavior they should follow to be sure of success in this mission.

It is the mystery surrounding our existence, the insecurity of the present and uncertainty about the future, the instinctive fear of death and the problem of the hereafter that helped religion to have a vice-like hold upon the mind of man. This has been especially the case in the past, when more in the grip of superstition and helpless against the forces of nature, he was more surrounded by fears and more completely at the mercy of his own subconscious impulses and the surroundings in which he lived. In the words of Hobbes, "... the acknowledging of one God eternal, infinite, and omnipotent may more easily be derived from the desire men have to know the causes of natural bodies, and their

several virtues and operations, than from the fear of what was to befall them in time to come."[7]

Whatever it is, the idea of an almighty Creator, an immortal Soul and a Hereafter have been the answers of religion to the questions about himself that arise in the mind of man. But these answers are not final. They are not accepted by every individual. They are not often accepted by reason and science. Eternity or infinity is something completely beyond the power of our imagination. We can never actually visualize either, however hard we may try. We can also never verify the existence of the other world which is such a common theme of the religious literature of the world.

The conclusions drawn by our intellect about the nature of the phenomena of the physical world and the causes leading to them to be acceptable must be verified by repeated observation and experiment. It is this method of objective study and repeated confirmation to put its deductions on an unshakable foundation that have invested science with the authority and the power we see today. On the other hand, the doctrines of religion have to be accepted on faith. The words of the founders and the Revelations made by them are considered to be a sufficient authority for their acceptance. In the words of Kant:

> "No one, it is true, will be able to boast that he knows there is a God and a future life, for, if he knows this, he is just the man whom I have long

wished to find.... I must not even say: It is morally certain that there is a God, etc., but: I am morally certain, that is, my belief in God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral nature that I am under as little apprehension of having the former torn from me as of losing the latter."[3]

In the words of Kierkegaard, God is the unknown:

"What is this unknown something with which the Reason collides when inspired by its paradoxical passion, with the result of unsettling even man's knowledge of himself? It is the Unknown. It is not a human being, in so far as we know what man is; nor is it any other known thing. So let us call this unknown something: God. It is nothing more than a name we assign to it. The idea of demonstrating that this unknown something (God) exists, could scarcely suggest itself to the Reason. For if God does not exist it would of course be impossible to prove it; and if he does exist it would be folly to attempt it."[25]

These are a few samples to show how outstanding intellects have reacted to the concept of God. Their reactions are different from utter denial to the assumption that all creation is a manifestation of this God. In the same way the great spiritual teachers of mankind have expressed diversity of views about the issue of God, soul or the hereafter. The territory of the supernatural is still a hotly contested and disputed province and one, who enters it, is likely to be more confused when coming out

than he was at the time of going in.

The main reason for the present clash and conflict of opinions in the province of religion is that philosophers, scholars and scientists, as also the common people, have always laboured under the impression that our senses and reason are the last instruments, provided by nature to man, for the study of himself and the world around. How this error has persisted from immemorial times we do not know. There are so many exceptions to this way of thinking, which tend to prove that sensory impressions and reason do not prescribe the limit to man's capacity for knowledge, that it is inconceivable how even the most penetrating intellects have failed to draw the obvious inference to correct their error.

4

WHAT IS REVELATION?

The very fact that the truths of religion are ascribed to Revelation or, in other words, direct communication from God, provides clear proof for the position that those who believe in the truth of Revelation, ipso facto, express their belief in the possibility of direct knowledge without the intermediation of the senses and the intellect. "Prophecy, or revelation, is sure knowledge revealed by God to man" says Spinoza. "A prophet is one who interprets the revelations of God to those who are unable to attain to sure knowledge of the matters revealed, and therefore can only apprehend them by simple faith."[26] In the words of William James, "The prophet has drunk more deeply than anyone of the cup of bitterness, but his countenance is so unshaken and he speaks such mighty words of cheer that his will becomes our will, and our life is kindled at his own."[27] For Shankaracharya, Shruti (Revelation) provides the sole authority for our concepts

about Transcendental Realities.

Philosophers and even religious-minded scientists have been ready to accept the position that God can communicate with the soul to account for the phenomenon of Revelation. There is no change in this attitude even now. But side by side with Revelation, there has existed the phenomenon of inspiration also. We find evidence for it from the time of Egyptian prehistory. Plato equates prophetic vision and inspiration with madness. "No man, when in his wits, attains prophetic truth and inspiration; but when he receives the inspired word, either his intelligence is enthralled in sleep, or he is demented by some distemper or possession."[28] From this it follows that Plato associated prophecy and inspiration only with oracles, visionaries and poets. He, perhaps, found it hard to admit that the beauty of expression and the wisdom that made him and his teacher, Socrates, immortal were also inspired — the creations of the same mysterious power that worked in oracles and poets also. This has been the error of the intellect which continues to this day.

Apart from Revelation, we now possess a vast store of evidence, gathered from the study of pyschic phenomena, to show that knowledge of distant events or of other minds than of one's own, or of the future or the past, is possible to certain gifted minds without the intermediary of their senses or their reason. Where-from does this knowledge come and how it is possible for the human

mind to presage future events in a causal world no one has been able to explain so far. But that a possibility does exist and that there always have been individuals, who possessed this faculty to a more or less extent, no unbiased observer can deny at present. We believe in Revelation, inspiration, clairvoyance, precognition and other forms of extrasensory perception without concerning ourselves too much with finding an answer to the riddle posed by them, because we complacently believe that the existence or absence of these special gifts has no direct bearing on our life or happiness. True, there are countless people who ardently search for teachers and/or methods that can help them to obtain these gifts as an additional source of knowledge, power or happiness. But even they are not troubled by the problem of the nature of these faculties and how they become possible for only a certain class of men and women and not for others.

The learned of our day no less than the scholars and philosophers of the past, show no awareness of the fact that the seed of the impulse, which first springs to life in the mind of the child and becomes more coherent and articulate in that of the adult, is the precursor of a new channel of perception in the mind of man, and that the ignorance of this fact and of the law that rules it can prove seriously detrimental to the life and survival of mankind. When this truth is known and becomes established as a verifiable phenomenon, almost the whole mass of intellectual speculation about Man and the Universe,

about Mind and Matter, from ancient times to our day would be rendered obsolete.

The desire for the vision of God, for self-awareness or for psychic power has not only a psychic but a biological origin like the burning desire for a member of the opposite sex in the mind of an adolescent boy or girl. We know how the desire can be perverted or distorted and what ordeals and agonies it can cause, in later years, for one who is not able to adapt oneself to the overpowering demands of the passion in a healthy way. In like manner, our ignorance and neglect of the law that makes us long for religious experience, for miraculous powers or psychic gifts can create aberrations and abnormalities which can persist throughout one's life.

It is, therefore, necessary that everyone who has an inborn desire for self-awareness, perfection, vision of God or psychic gifts should understand that the wish is the outcome of a ferment in his subconscious, in the same way as ardent longing for a charming member of the other sex denotes the ferment of the reproductive urge in one's mind. There should be no mistake about the origin of the impulse. It is the outward expression of a basic urge almost as powerful as the urge to procreate. Like the latter, it has an organic seed-bed in the body and needs the same assiduous care and attention for its healthy expression as the erotic impulse. The current ignorance about the real nature of religious feeling and the confusion prevailing in the province of the super-

natural, make the task even more difficult and labourious than would be the case if, like the province of science, the realm of the spirit, too, were subjected to study and experimentation on the part of those deeply interested in it.

Alas! how frail is our intellect. From the time of Plato, who made a distinction between the gift of wisdom in a philosopher and inspiration in a poet, and Lucretius, who denied life after death to the soul, to the time of Comte, Darwin, Marx, Russell and other thinkers and scientists, who deny an independent life to soul and, some of them, even the existence of God, all the brilliant intellects that thundered against the central beliefs of faith showed no awareness of the fact that the same mysterious power that spoke to prophets in their revelations, to poets in their inspirations, to oracles in their prophecies, was also at the back of the talent which they used to deny the very existence of the mana on which they were nurtured, and which had been the real source of the marvellous creations that had kept their names alive. The tragedy of the modern learned mind is that it is still in the dark about the mysterious force that has contrived its evolution from the state of a reasonless brute to that of a rational being and which is still active in him to solve the problem of his own existence.

It is not the great thinker, scholar or scientist who wins distinction with a more capable organ of thought, but a deathless spark of celestial fire shines more brightly in

him than the common folk. In the words of Walt Whitman:

> "In due time the evolution theory will have to abate its vehemence, it cannot be allowed to dominate everything else, and will have to take its place as a segment of the circle, the cluster — as but one of many theories, many thoughts, of profoundest value — and readjusting and differentiating much, yet leaving the divine secrets just as inexplicable and unreachable as before — maybe more so."[29]

A great error of our age has been to deny independent existence to mind. Even in the case of those who believed in a Cosmic Reservoir of thought, the error has been to picture it on the model of the human mind. This confined their vision. The moment we ascribe everlasting life to the soul or an independent existence to mind, our concept of the universe must simultaneously undergo a tremendous change. In that case, we cannot suppose that the human mind is the last product that Cosmic Intelligence could create. There can be superior models, even infinitely superior models in the universe. A Cosmic Reservoir that can supply four billion human beings with all their thought and feeling, hopes and aspirations, art and science, knowledge and wisdom, cannot be a magnified image of the human mind, but an Oceanic Intelligence with an extension in time and space, boundless power, grandeur and sublimity entirely beyond our capacity to imagine. The evolution of the human brain to

its present height provides irrefutable evidence of this fact.

To suppose that an infinitely complex organ of thought could be possible by chance variations, is to believe in an impossibility. There has been no greater insult to human intelligence and no challenge to man's dignity than that flung by the orthodox theory of evolution which denies belief in the existence of a Plan in nature and of Intelligence as a guiding Force and stabilizing Power behind the universe. In the words of Henri Bergson:

> "If our analysis is correct, it is consciousness, or rather supra-consciousness, that is at the origin of life. Consciousness, or supra-consciousness, is the name for the rocket whose extinguished fragments fall back as matter... But this consciousness, which is a need of creation, is made manifest to itself only where creation is possible. It lies dormant when life is condemned to automatism; it wakens as soon as the possibility of a choice is restored."[30]

The latter statement is again an off-spring of the irrepressible intellect. It is easier to suppose that an ant can grasp all the knowledge possessed by mankind, and pass judgments on its collective behaviour than that the human mind can know even a fragment of the Wisdom that has created the Cosmos.

Religion, philosophy and science represent the levels to which the human mind could rise in the progress

achieved during the various epochs in history. They do not represent the end, either of the wisdom revealed by the soul or of temporal knowledge gained by the intellect. The error has been to accord finality to what is but the beginning of a long, long voyage to a shore beyond our ken at present. This error has repeated itself age after age and is, perhaps, more egregious now than it was ever before. The reason is that the moder intellect has tightly shut the door on Revelation to share the honour alone, and has usurped the position of a judge whose word is law.

It is the human ego, with its intolerance of other's views, that is often responsible for the battles and wrangles in the domain of knowledge. Almost every great thinker, skilled in penmanship, with appropriate arguments tries to win finality for his views. This is an incorrigible habit of reason. It can never be stilled into that perfect calm which knows that the search is over.

Whether the knowledge to be gained is spiritual or temporal, it will reveal itself only drop by drop until the human intellect is filled to its capacity. The more the volume of knowledge gained, the nearer one is to its source, namely the soul from which all knowledge comes. There the search ends. The world of Knowledge and the Knower coalesce into one. It is then that an oceanic "I", without beginning or end, contemplates itself. At this point the infinite multiplicity of the universe becomes a single, unfathomable unity. The

ocean is sucked up by a drop; the cosmos swallowed by a grain of sand. There is then no infinitely large or infinitely small, no time and timelessness, no past and no future, no observing Knower and the objective Known, but one indescribable Being in whose light all thoughts, all questions, all problems, and all answers melt away, as if they and the world from which they arose had never existed at all.

We have made a fleeting survey of the currents and cross-currents in religion, philosophy and science to show that there is no sure foothold for an earnest seeker to stand firmly upon without being washed away in one direction or the other. The position is even more difficult for those gentle natures, whose own transparent honesty leads them to believe the words of those who profess to be adepts in the knowledge of the supernatural and the Divine. For every sensible man and woman it has become necessary to have a healthy attitude towards religion and the supernatural, as this holy territory, too, now forms a productive field for spiritual entrepreneurs. The province of the Divine is still a foreign territory to the mind of man. Whatever is recorded in the religious scriptures of mankind or in the doctrines of the occultists has still to receive confirmation at the hands of Time.

The first endeavour of every true seeker must be to gain a brief first-hand knowledge of the scriptures of the various faiths. For this, a short study of only a few books is necessary. This study is sure to expand the mental

horizon of the seeker and to allow him a bird's eye view of the foundations on which all the religions of mankind stand at present. The study is likely to make it clear that belief in Divinity, whether in man himself or external to him, and constant striving towards a spiritual ideal provide the two main themes of the revealed religious scriptures of mankind. From a common-sense point of view also, it is apparent that a life of temperance, contentment, patience, honesty, charity, compassion and love can be more conducive to well-being, honour, peace and happiness than an undisciplined life devoid of character and principle.

A concrete reality in front of every sensible person, who desires to mould his life in a manner to extract the greatest good and happiness out of it, is that the human race is in a state of evolution towards a pattern of consciousness of which glimpses have been provided by the greatest prophets, sages, philosophers, mystics, scientists and artists of mankind. Every profound insight, every flow of inspiration and every flash of discovery has come from that still unfathomed depth of the mind which the slow evolution of the brain is tending to bring within the conscious control of human beings. A perfect specimen of future humanity could be one who can combine the enlightened consciousness of Buddha or Christ with the versatility of Vyasa, the faith of Mohammed, the scientific acumen of Newton, the wisdom of Plato and the pen of Shakespeare.

A great weakness in the erudite mind is the supposition that the volume of knowledge, available during its lifetime, which has been studied and assimilated by it, prescribes the limit to which the human brain can reach. If it could be possible to resurrect Vyasa, Patanjali, Confucious, Parmenides, Aristotle, Pythagores, Cicero, Avicenna, Omar Khayyam, Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus or Galileo to life at this moment, and take them sightseeing across the earth, with a short spell of study in the larger libraries, it would be hard for them to believe that they have woken up to the same world in which they had lived hundreds or thousands of years before. It would take years of study and instruction for them to grasp all the new knowledge gained by mankind in this interval.

From this analogy, we can easily infer what would be the state of mind of the illustrious scientists, like Einstein, and distinguished scholars of this century if it could be possible to raise them up from the dead to have a look at mankind and the knowledge gained by that time in the year of grace 2500. The misfortune is that, deluded by ego and deceived by the applause of a fickle audience, many of our present-day intellectuals look upon themselves as the embodiment of all that can possibly be known about the subjects on which they pose as authorities. It is for this reason that, when confronted by a new line of thought which they cannot fit in with their own pre-conceived ideas, they reject it outright instead of

giving it a fair trial to decide how far it is right or wrong. If they could vividly imagine how trite and even ridiculous their ponderous volumes of soon-to-be disproved ideas and theories will appear to the eyes of the not-too-distant progeny, they would show more sobriety and more caution in the expression of their views.

The joint effort of a vast army of academicians and scholars of our time to eliminate the idea of Divinity from every sphere of human thought, without even a thorough study of religion, is likely to prove an undertaking as ill-conceived and ill-advised as have been the attempts of papacy to banish reason from the precincts of faith. For any impartial observer the concept of continued organic evolution of the brain to account for the phenomena of enlightenment, inspiration, genius and psychic faculties, that have baffled all attempts at elucidation so far, should prove a readily available hypothesis to work upon and experiment with before rejecting it as untenable. The urgency for this lies in the fact that there is no other single consistent explanation to account for these extraordinary conditions of the human mind.

> "This scientific skepticism of the impersonal," writes A.H. Maslow, "even in the impersonal realm, is unwarranted. The history of science, or at least of the great scientists, is a story of sudden and ecstatic insights into the truth, truth which is then slowly, carefully, cautiously validated by more pedestrian workers who function more like coral insects than

like eagles. I think, for instance, of visions like Kekule's dream of the benzene ring."

"Too many people of limited vision" continues Maslow, "define the essence of science as cautious checking, validating of hypothesis, finding out if other people's ideas are correct or not. But, insofar as science is also a technique of discovery, it will have to learn how to foster peak-experience insights and visions and then how to handle them as data. Other examples of Being-knowledge — veridical perception of hitherto unperceived truth in peak experience — come from the perspicuity gained through Being-love, from certain religious experiences, from certain group-therapy experiences of intimacy, from intellectual illuminations, or from profound aesthetic experiences."[31]

But this is not the whole story. In the very next sentence, Maslow writes,

"In the last few months, a brand-new possibility for the validation of B-knowledge (illumination-knowledge) has opened up. In three different universities, LSD was able to cure alcoholism in about 50 per cent of the cases. Once we have recovered from our happiness at learning about this great blessing, this unexpected miracle and, since we are insatiable human beings, we inevitably ask: 'How about the ones who don't recover?' Now we make our big jump:" Maslow adds further, "This same list of described character-

> istics of reality of the world, seen at certain times, is just about the same as what have been called the eternal values, the eternal verities. We see here the old familiar trinity of truth, beauty, and goodness. That is to say, this list of described characteristics is also simultaneously a list of values. These characteristics are what the great religionists and philosophers have valued, and this is practically the same list that most serious thinkers of mankind have agreed upon as the ultimate or highest value of life."[31]

The inference is clear, Maslow equates mystical ecstasy with the visionary experience induced by drugs like LSD and mescaline. This is clear from his comment that:

> "This is nothing new. Any reader of Zen, Taoistic or mystical literatures knows what I am talking about. Every mystic has tried to describe this vividness and particularity of the concrete object and, at the same time, its eternal, sacred, symbolic quality (like a Platonic essence). And now, in addition, we have many such descriptions from the experiments (Huxley, for instance) with the psychedelic drugs."[32]

It is incredible that a phenomenon that has been witnessed and commented upon by some of the most penetrating intellects, mankind has ever produced, should be so little understood by the scholars of our time. Genuine mystical experience has almost always been

attended by prophetic revelation, miracles or, at least, psychic gifts and genius. The greatest mystics have been great writers, great poets, great speakers with a good deal of personal magnetism, healing power and extrasensory faculties. It is the combination of most or all of these gifts that won for them the homage of their contemporaries and an exalted place among the elite of the human race. Why this important fact is being repeatedly overlooked by the learned of our time is inexplicable.

It is primarily lack of exhaustive study of the phenomenon and, secondly, the skeptical climate in the academies in which modern scholars are bred up that is at the root of this blunder. If drugs could induce the same state of divine inspiration that characterized the Buddha, Socrates, Christ, Shankaracharya, Mohammed, St. Paul, Rumi, Guru Nanak, St. Francis of Assisi and other great prophets and mystics of the past, the present world would be crowded with models of perfection and sublime vision making it a happier place to live in. On the contrary, what we see is a singular absence of these lofty men and women that won the greatest names in history. It is our own lack of insight and distorted thinking which is confusing drug experience with mystical ecstasy or bringing down these exalted souls to the level of the drug or alcohol addicts.

The mystery surrounding revelation and prophecy is as insolvable now as it was in ancient times. It would take volumes to reproduce the views expressed about this

amazing phenomena from the time of the Vedas. What divine intelligence reveals the future to a prophet or inspires the mind of a poet, a musician or an artist we do not know. When confronted with this problem, the thinking of some of the greatest intellects the earth has produced has been erroneous, or only partly correct. Thus, according to Plato:

> "There is also a madness which is a divine gift, and the source of the chiefest blessings granted to men. For prophecy is a madness, and the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona, when out of their senses, have conferred great benefits on Hellas, both in public and private life, but when in their senses few or none. And I might also tell you how the Sibyl and other inspired persons have given to many an one many an intimation of the future which has saved them from falling. But it would be tedious to speak of what every one knows."[32]

Plato makes a distinction between wisdom and inspiration. For him, the former was sanity and reason and the latter madness. He says:

> "Of madness there were two kinds; one produced by human infirmity, the other... a divine release of the soul from the yoke of custom and convention... The divine madness was subdivided into four kinds, prophetic, initiatory, poetic, erotic, having four gods presiding over them; the first was the inspiration of Apollo, the second that of Dionysus, the third that of

the Muses, the fourth that of Aphrodite and Eros. In the description of the last kind of madness, which was also said to be the best, we spoke of the affection of love in a figure, into which we introduced a tolerably credible and possibly true though partly erring myth, which was also a hymn in honour of Love, who is your lord and also mine, Phaedrus, and the guardian of fair children, and to him we sung the hymn in measured and solemn strain."[32]

In a sense this Socratic Dialogue confirms the views I am expressing that Prophecy (psychic gifts), inspiration (genius), erotic love and madness are allied and originate from the same organic source in Man. At another place, Plato adds:

"Then I knew that not by wisdom do poets write poetry, but by a sort of genius and inspiration; they are like diviners or soothsayers who also say many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them. The poets appeared to me to be much in the same case; and I further observed that upon the strength of their poetry they believed themselves to be the wisest of men in other things in which they were not wise."[33]

5

GENIUS AND EVOLUTION

Plato failed to notice that he himself was inspired and the wisdom he was giving to the world was born of inspiration as real as the inspiration of a poet. This is the enigma of expanded consciousness. The whole life-story of Socrates and his constant reference to the Daemon that guided him provides clear evidence of the fact that Socrates had an awakened Kundalini. The same is true of Plato. His marvellous intellect was a gift from the same Power. But neither was aware of the mystery behind the amazing talent they displayed. Its wonder has persisted for the last 2300 years. In his declining years, Plato was afflicted by meloncholia, a common disorder of genius. Had he but known that the madness he ascribed to the inspired would fall to his share also, he might have understood the phenomenon of genius better than he did.

"The participation that we have in the knowledge of

truth," says Montaigne, "whatever it may be, has not been acquired by our own powers. God has taught us that clearly enough by the witnesses that he has chosen from the common people, simple and ignorant, to instruct us in his admirable secrets... It is not by reasoning or by our understanding that we have received our religion; it is by external authority and command..."[34] In the words of Locke, "Reason is natural revelation, whereby the eternal Father of light and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties: revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately; which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives that they come from God."[5]

The fact that new knowledge, new insights and prophetic revelation were possible in certain extraordinary states of the human mind has been known for the last thousands of years. "Though God Almighty can speak to a man by dreams, visions, voice, and inspiration," writes Hobbes, "yet He obliges no man to believe He hath so done to him that pretends it; who, being a man, may err and, which is more, may lie."[7]

Inspiration has been a phenomenon so widespread and so well attested on the testimony of great poets, thinkers, musicians, artists and even scientists that it would almost amount to stupidity to deny it. In the words of Emerson:

"...The spirit only can teach. Not any profane man, not any sensual, not any liar, not any slave can teach, but only he can give, who has; he only can create, who is. The man on whom the soul descends, through whom the soul speaks, alone can teach. Courage, piety, love, wisdom, can teach; and every man can open his door to these angels, and they shall bring him the gift of tongues. But the man who aims to speak as books enable, as synods use, as the fashion guides, and as interest commands, babbles. Let him hush."[35]

The well-known historian, Toynbee, comments on prophetic vision and inspiration in these words:

"The attempt to translate Prophetic Vision, expressed in the language of poetic truth, into a metaphysical blue-print, expressed in the language of scientific truth, has two untoward effects. It forces us to direct our attention from what is essential and momentous in the poetic truth of Prophetic Vision to the trivial and intrinsically insoluble question of its relation to scientific truth; and it substitutes a provisional report for a timeless intuition. Even if we could succeed in translating poetic truth into scientific truth at the risk of robbing it of its meaning and value, our scientific formula would no sooner have been drafted than it would be already obsolete."[36]

I have cited a few passages from some well-known scholars as a sample to show how they viewed the

phenomenon of prophetic vision and revelation. There is hardly any scholar among the younger generations of our time who has anything profound or even thoughtful to say on the subject. The general impression prevailing among most psychologists of today is that the theory of the subconscious or change in chemistry, as induced by drugs, fasts, etc. accounts for all the phenomena witnessed in religion. They have no inkling of the fact that the very next major discovery of the factors responsible for schizophrenia and allied intractable mental disorders would bring down the hollow structure they have built up tumbling to the ground.

It is strange that the erudite of our day, engaged in the study of consciousness, should be so apathetic towards a historical succession of events that has been at the bottom of all the progress made by mankind in religion, philosophy, art and science. Wherever we look, the first discovery, the first insight, the first new thought and every innovation made in music, poetry, or art has come from a gifted mind. All the explanations provided by modern scientists, from Freud onwards for this monumental phenomenon, have been unsatisfactory and incorrect. The obvious inference is that the position has not been studied in depth and, in the absence of a true explanation, purely speculative opinions have been expressed to account for it.

Every true revelation and/or prophetic vision has proceeded from that well-known, and often described,

Dervishes in their ecstatic dance

St. Francis of Assisi in ecstacy

mental condition known as mystical ecstasy. We have accounts of it from the time of the Vedas, nearly 2000 years before the birth of Christ. Even at such a distance of time inspiration is associated with prophetic vision and illuminated consciousness.[37]

The Soma drink, repeatedly mentioned in the Vedas, is the ambrosia of revelation and ecstasy. Among the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans and even in Europe up to the middle of the 19th century, revelation and prophetic vision were assigned their due place of honour in the thinking of the intelligentia. It is only now that the learned have almost completely lost touch with a most remarkable series of events in history that have been more instrumental in shaping the destiny of mankind than the might of rulers and the endless succession of battles, and wars, conquests and defeats that crowd its pages.

Many modern writings on inspiration, mystical ecstasy or other phenomena of religion, unlike those of the past, are often as off the point as the north pole is from the south. The reason why the research now done on psychic phenomena, yoga, meditation, extrasensory perception and hypnosis, has not been productive of any tangible result lies in the fact that the mental climate and the methods used at present can never fathom the mystery of the mind. This kind of study may have its advantages, but, so far as psychic phenomena, mystical ecstasy, and inspiration are concerned, there has been no progress

and, it is likely, there will be none in the decades to come until certain basic facts concerning the study of the soul are recognized and acted upon by the scientists or our time.

Plato and other thinkers and scholars of the past have not been wrong in believing that prophetic vision and madness are allied. But, as we know very well, genius and insanity too are interrelated. In a number of studies made by scientists in the United States and other places it has been demonstrated that the same factors which cause schizophrenia are also present in high talent.[38]

Yoga and mental disorders are not too far apart and, according to traditional views in the East, religious striving, when misdirected or when not attended by strict self-discipline and purity of the heart can end in mental derangement. For every unbiased student, the inference should be clear that in some mysterious way prophetic vision, revelation, genius and inspiration are interconnected. The danger of insanity is common to all. There are scores of books in which the close relationship between genius and psychosis has been clearly brought out. There is also ample evidence to show that, in most cases, mystics have been prone to hallucinations, to abnormal behaviour, to morbid excesses and extremes which clearly betoken an aberrant or unbalanced state of the mind.

In the light of the data about geniuses and the illuminated, available to us for a period of more than

2000 years, it is difficult to understand what considerations prevent modern scholars from the obvious deduction that, in both these categories, namely, that of mystical illumination and genius, the brain, in some way, is involved. If it were not so, the pathological symptom of incipient madness or clearly marked mental aberration would never be such a common feature of the specially-gifted mind. It is true that the very behaviour of members of these two classes has been often eccentric and their ways of life, particularly of the mystics, abnormal. But these very characteristics point to an erratic state of the mind. They deviated from the common mould of normal human beings. This shows that the brain and the mind are modelled that way. It is the involvement of the brain and the ignorance of scholars about the real nature of the phenomenon, during the last thousands of years, that has stood in the way of a solution to the problem, and to the continuance of the suffering and misery that has resulted from it.

Genius or prophetic vision is not a form of madness as Plato and some modern psychologists, like Lombroso, have been led to believe. But it is often attended by abnormal behaviour or mental distemper which is a different thing. Einstein, Emerson, Bernard Shaw, Tagore, Mahatma Ghandi and many other distinguished men and women of genius have been normal in their behaviour and thinking. The shadow of insanity has pursued the mystical and the highly talented mind as we are still

unaware of the organic factors that distinguish an enlightened or talented brain from a normal one. That these factors really exist, there is no doubt at all for the simple reason that it is not possible with any kind of artificial stimulation or drug to induct genius in a normal brain or to make a retarded child bloom into an intellectual. But what these factors are we have still to learn by patient study and research.

Illumination and genius, which we are discussing, are not isolated from the other spheres of human life. It is because the phenomenon has not been understood in its true proportions that its tremendous potential for human progress or its reverse has not been realized. The learned world has no idea of the price mankind is paying for this lack of knowledge of a most important secret of nature at the present stage of its evolution. Little do our leading intellects suspect that, just as only a thin line divides a genius from a lunatic, so is there only a narrow margin between a healthy or faulty evolution of the human brain.

Distorted evolution can be catastrophic. This is the misfortune of our day. We have been deficient in the effort to gain a better knowledge of the mind and the prejudice shown by some of the leading intellects of the last, at least, two centuries, has been one of the gravest errors ever made by man. If the brain is evolving our willing cooperation is essential for the healthy functioning of the process. If, due to ignorance, we fail to cooperate or even act in the reverse direction, the process can

malfunction leading to disasterous consequences. One of these is perversion and distortion of the intellect.

It is this error which is at the bottom of the explosive condition of the world today. To be frank and fair, I must say that, if a catastrophe occurs, the blame for it will be laid at the door of leading intellects by the ruined progeny. The reason for this lies in the fact that our preoccupation with the wrong theories of the 19th century psychologists and scholars about the nature of mind has been entirely unwarranted. Even now the thinking of many among the learned about mind and consciousness is grossly mistaken. The knowledge possessed by scientists about the nature of the medium, we call mind is extremely limited. As Penfield pointed out, the power that animates our brain does not correspond to any form of physical energy known to science. It is something that has so far defied all our attempts to explore.

The error lies in this, that at the present moment the human brain is evolving at a speed that has never been in evidence before during the historical period. This increased tempo of organic transformation of the brain is, in turn, due to the amenities and facilities provided by science coupled with a high increase in the degree of application of the mind. Books, newspapers, magazines, television, radio and all activity, that needs prolonged attention on the part of common men and women, consume a far greater amount of mental effort than was the case at any

time before in the history of mankind. This constant mental application, in turn, has a profound effect on the evolutionary mechanisms resulting in a more rapid change in the microscopic structures of the brain than is possible otherwise.

The misfortune is that continued organic evolution of the brain has not even been suspected. There is no topic under the sun, from bacteria to life on other planets in space or from atoms to galaxies, which is not discussed every day by scientists in books, on the television or in newspapers. The only object excluded from this scientific study is the idea of Divinity that has haunted the human mind persistently for the past thousands of years. Has the mystery of existence been thoroughly explored and has it been proved conclusively that there are no energies in the universe which correspond to the concepts of religion and have been a part of human thinking from the very start. If not, can we call this apathy to a perennial problem a healthy attitude of the intellect?

It will not take long now to verify the statement I am making with advanced instruments of science. At the most, the investigation is likely to take a couple of decades or even less. The dogmatic attitude of the learned, due to biased early indoctrination, wrong study, infertile imagination or inherent obduracy will then come to light with startling clarity. The serious damage that will have occurred by that time, due to ignorance of this mighty law of nature, will plainly show how injudicious

have been the decisions and how wrong the opinions of some of the brightest intellects of our time in regard to religion and its position in the life of man.

With extended knowledge about the activity of brain, the very adverse effects caused by our failure to understand the mechanism of evolution may, in course of time, help in the discovery of the mechanism itself. Mental and nervous disorders, increased alcoholism, drug addiction, crime, violence, hunger for thrills and sensations, restlessness, over activity in children, revolt of the youth, distaste for work and almost all untoward mental conditions, which come to our notice every day, are the direct result of a malfunctioning evolutionary process, brought about by a faulty mode of life and unhygienic surroundings in which large sections of mankind are forced to live at present. An explosive back-lash, such as has never been witnessed in history, will follow the discovery exposing the most grievous intellectual error of our time.

To hold that the human mind has not evolved to a more advanced performance during the last few thousand years is to belie the evidence of history. This evolution could never occur without the participation of the brain. We cannot transform a person of low or even average intelligence into a gifted polymath by any means known to science. In order to be able to do so, it would need a change in the cerebral cortex to its roots. In every age, there have been only an extremely few who could be

classed as geniuses or gifted writers, philosophers, scientists, musicians, artists and the like. The vast majority could never attain the same dimension in thought, art or skill. Even where we associate this excellence with enhanced capacity of the brain, we often ascribe the peculiarity to chance or heredity. The idea that this excellence might be due to an organic improvement in the structure of the brain, due to continued evolution, seldom enters our mind. The reason for this lies in the fact that the appearance of genius has been very rare and the phenomenon has been so complex and varied that a consistent explanation is difficult to find. One of the factors that has contributed to this difficulty is that genius has seldom, if ever, produced offsprings that matched or excelled it. This had the effect of discountenancing the suggestion that heredity or evolution had anything to do with it.

It is precisely because the phenomenon has been so complex that it should have received greater attention on the part of the erudite. The rank and file of science is likely to refuse credence to the hypothesis of continued evolution, for the idea is being presented for the first time. Even a staunch champion of evolution, like Teilhard-de-Chardin did not show any apperception of the fact that the human brain was still in a state of biological change. There is no admission of the possibility in the writings of great scientists nor has the theory been ever propounded to account for the phenomena of illumination

and genius as the products of a still working organic evolution of the brain.

In the light of these facts, I do not envisage the possibility of acceptance of the hypothesis by the learned unless it is proved. It is exactly on this premise that we are working. The very idea of continued evolution of the brain carries with it the seeds of another possibility likely to shake the entire foundation of present-day science. The research done on psychic phenomena has already prepared the soil for this revolutionary change. True, there are many scientists who deny validity to these phenomena, but there are many others who vouch for them. The position has become so surcharged that only a spark is needed to cause an explosion in the whole area.

The ground for this assumption lies in this, that if the human brain is still evolving towards a pre-determined target, as for instance, the illuminated consciousness of a prophet or the talented mind of a genius, the inference then becomes clear that evolution is not a random process but a property of life, thought out and planned in advance on a scale and with a purpose beyond our comprehension at present. If the existence and evolution of life are planned acts of creation, the only logical conclusion that can be drawn from this then is that the universe is ruled by an Almighty Intelligence which we call God under different names. This would have, in turn, another dramatic effect. It would then be conclusively proved that, so far as the phenomenon of life is

concerned, Revelation has been right on this momentous issue, and Reason, as represented by science, has been wrong.

This is the dilemma before the scholars of our day. Many of them have somehow convinced themselves that there is no spiritual order in the universe, no Divine Power to watch over the actions of mortals, no Celestial Court to adjudge their deeds and no After-life for one to reap the harvest, sweet or bitter, of good or bad actions done in this life. The tragedy has been that reason has presumed too much. The obvious fact that our senses reveal only a tiny fragment of Creation, and our reason cannot penetrate to areas beyond that fragment has never tended to make the learned pause and consider that the opinions they were expressing could be correct only for an extremely limited area, and could not hold true for regions above or beyond that. The result has been that a phantom science, a phantom philosophy and a phantom scholarship, which can never penetrate to the Reality behind the senses, has rashly usurped a position of authority over the whole horizon of man's life to posit a phantom world as a Reality true for all time which it is not. For this reason, science has been instrumental in creating a mental climate which is not at all healthy for the race. The negation of Revelation, as a valued instrument for the spiritual evolution of mankind, leaving the whole area open to the control of Reason is at the bottom of the egotistical and materialistic fever that has

gripped the intelligent modern mind.

Science is as helpless in the investigation of super-sensory planes of creation as sightless eyes would be in a world of perpetual light. The error has been to ascribe finality to the objective world perceived by the senses and to exclude from our observation and study what is beyond their power of perception. In this way science, by its studied neglect of transcendental realms, has substantially reduced its area of observation. The view that the world is real in time and space, on which this deduction was based has since been abandoned, but the habit of thought still persists.

6

MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE AN ENIGMA TO SCIENCE

The whole effort of science is directed towards the explanation of the world presented by our senses but the point is: does this sensual image represent the ultimate? If not, the study of science, if carried on within the same frontiers can only have the effect of confining all the hopes or aspirations of human beings within its periphery, in this way circumscribing the flight of human imagination and thought.

Nature has strange ways of fulfilling its purpose. The present reaction of the youth, even among scholars and scientists, against the narrow dogmatic attitudes of the older generations is nature's attempt to break the chains forged by orthodoxy and conservatism. The long range effect of this rebellion might be to extend the frontiers of science and to confer validity on those phenomena which, in spite of their genuine character, the orthodox tried their utmost to discredit. The direct outcome of this

conflict, among the ranks of scientists, is that science itself is slowly losing prestige and appeal which it exercised only a few decades ago. The experiments on Kundalini will be the last link in the chain of events that will free science from the fetters that have cramped its movement and narrowed its vision during the last two centuries.

> "There have been times" writes Max Planck, "when science and philosophy were alien, if not actually antagonistic to each other. These times have passed. Philosophers have realized that they have no right to dictate to scientists their aims and the methods for attaining them; and scientists have learned that the starting-point of their investigations does not lie solely in the perceptions of the senses, and that science cannot exist without some small portion of metaphysics. Modern Physics impresses us particularly with the truth of the old doctrine which teaches that there are realities existing apart from our sense-perceptions, and that there are problems and conflicts where these realities are of greater value for us than the richest treasures of the world of experience."[39]

William James expresses the same idea in another way:

> "The most useful investigator," he says "because the most sensitive observer, is always he whose eager interest in one side of the question is balanced by an equally keen nervousness lest he become

deceived. Science has organized this nervousness into a regular technique, her so-called method of verification; and she has fallen so deeply in love with the method that one may even say she has ceased to care for truth by itself at all. It is only truth as technically verified that interests her. The truth of truths might come in merely affirmative form, and she would decline to touch it."[40]

Commenting on the basic error that the common-sense universe is real, Planck writes:

"How do we discover the individual laws of Physics, and what is their nature? It should be remarked, to begin with, that we have no right to assume that any physical laws exist, or if they have existed up to now, that they will continue to exist in a similar manner in future. It is perfectly conceivable that one fine day Nature should cause an unexpected event to occur which would baffle us all; and if this were to happen we would be powerless to make any objection, even if the result would be that, in spite of our endeavours, we should fail to introduce order into the resulting confusion. In such an event, the only course open to science would be to declare itself bankrupt. For this reason, science is compelled to begin by the general assumption that a general rule of law dominates throughout Nature."[39]

Tolstoy and Maritain are even more critical of the orthodox scientific outlook:

"What we call science today" says Tolstoy, "is merely a haphazard collection of disconnected scraps of knowledge, most of them useless, and many of which, instead of giving us absolute truth provide the most bizarre delusions, presented as truth one day and refuted the next."[41]

"We see the same history of progress —" says Maritain, "even, may be, more strikingly — since the time of Galileo in the physicomathematical sciences — that is to say in the art of translating sensible phenomena into quantitative symbols: and this is precisely because those studies are in truth the poorest of all in intelligibility, the least exacting in intellectuality, hence the easiest."[42]

It would be grossly unfair to deny to science the credit for the marvellous transformation wrought in the life of mankind during the last two centuries. The miracles it has wrought in knowledge, communication, transport, agriculture, irrigation, architecture, medicine, surgery, health, hygiene, and in a hundred other ways constitute a most remarkable achievement in the history of mankind.

"Man has existed for about a million years" says Bertrand Russell. "He has possessed writing for about 6,000 years, agriculture somewhat longer, but perhaps not much longer. Science, as a dominant factor in determining the beliefs of educated men, has existed for about 300 years; as a source of economic technique, for about 150 years. In this brief period it

has proved itself an incredibly powerful revolutionary force. When we consider how recently it has risen to power, we find ourselves forced to believe that we are at the very beginning of its work in transforming human life."[42]

But when this unparalleled success becomes opium for the mind and usurps the entire attention of the learned to the exclusion of problems as essential for the progress and happiness of the race, it is time that a reappraisal of the position is made to find out where the weakness lies. In the words of Bertrand Russell again:

"The effect of science upon our view of man's place in the universe has been of two opposite kinds; it has at once degraded and exalted him. It has degraded him from the standpoint of contemplation, and exalted him from that of action. The latter effect has gradually come to outweigh the former, but both have been important."[43]

For a section of the intelligentia of our day, the idea of a divine power controlling the universe is often too hard to digest. They see no evidence for it in their survey of the cosmos or the kingdom of life on earth. The bloody battle for survival that has raged for billions of years on earth makes the idea of a compassionate God appear odd and even ironical. They find it difficult to believe in a God who, in the words of Lucretius, "can at once make all the different heavens to roll and warm with ethereal fires all the fruitful earths, or be present in all places at all times,

Inexplicable Psychic Phenomena

Manifestation of the spirit, Silver Belle, the guide of the medium Ethel Post-Parrish, seen seated inside the curtained cabinet. Eighty-one people are said to have witnessed the materialization in 1953.

Subject (right) under drug influence

to bring darkness with clouds and shake with noise the heaven's serene expanse, to hurl lightnings and often throw down his own temples, and withdrawing into the deserts, there to spend his rage in practising his bolt which often passes the guilty by and strikes dead the innocent and unoffending?"[44]

In the words of Claude Bernard, "To-day we differentiate three kinds of properties exhibited in the phenomena of living beings: physical properties, chemical properties and vital properties. But the term 'vital properties' is itself only provisional; because we call properties vital which we have not yet been able to reduce to physico-chemical terms; but in that we shall doubtless succeed some day."[45] Freud expresses the same idea in a different way, "If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception", he says, "that everything living dies from causes within itself, and returns to the inorganic, we can only say: 'The goal of all life is death;' and, casting back: 'The inanimate was there before the animate.' "[46]

The picture of the cosmos, present before our eyes, makes it hard for one to assume that a creation so stupendous in extent, so rigid in its operation and so realistic in its objective aspect could be the handiwork of an Intelligent Being whom, to serve his ends, man has built in his own image. It is on account of this incorrect presentation of the Reality that theistic religions have lost much of their appeal for the rational mind. On the

other side, there are hard-core scientists who are not, at all, ready to concede that there can exist other channels of perception, besides the senses and the intellect, for man to apprehend the superphysical aspects of the cosmos. This polarity in the perceptive power of the human mind has begun to be suspected, but lacks general acceptance from the rank and file of science.

In order to typify how hard it is for even renowned scholars to break through the opaque shell of prejudice, Lord Kelvin's fiery outburst against psychic phenomena can serve as an example. "Clairvoyance and the like, he declared, were the results 'of bad observation chiefly, somewhat mixed up with the effects of willful imposture, acting on an innocent trusting mind... that wretched superstition of animal magnetism and table-turning and spiritualism and mesmerism and clairvoyance of which we have heard so much...' in his view, they were only fit for the rubbish heap."[47]

The fact that extrasensory perception and hypnotism are now respected areas of scientific research and hundreds of eminent scientists have since attested to their validity clearly shows how shortsighted human vision can be, and how time relentlessly exposes the errors of mortals even those who had passed for authorities or paragons of learning in their own time.

In this context, the view expressed by Professor H.H. Price in his Presidential Address to the Society of Pyschical Research in 1949 is interesting. Commenting

on the importance of psi phenomena, he said it was likely this study would throw an entirely new light upon the nature of human personality and its position in the universe. Also, that in time, it might transform the whole intellectual outlook upon which our present civilization is based.[47]

> "Moreover, in our search for a comprehensible hypothesis," Price added, "we must not mind taking hints from quarters which are accounted scientifically disreputable... It is well to remember that in India and the Buddhist countries men not necessarily inferior to Europeans in intelligence have been devoting themselves for very many centuries to the deepening and extension of human consciousness. The theories which they have been led to frame may have got mixed up with all sorts of dubious theological and cosmological dogmas. Nevertheless they may give us some help in framing a more adequate and genuinely scientific theory for ourselves. I even think that the humble savage may have something to teach us... Anthropologists have collected a whole mass of material which falls within our province, though their scientific orthodoxy has usually led them to assume that it must somehow be explained away as fraud and delusion."[47]

The two main metaphysical systems, Vedanta and Shaivism, built in India on the basis of experience gained in mystical ecstacy or Turiya and the Revelations

granted in this exalted state are as logical and precise as the philosophical systems of the most distinguished Western philosophers. They are even more profound, accurate and comprehensive than the latter, for they embody a study of the invisible levels of creation carried out in the course of generations. The scientists all over the world will have to adopt the same methods and to practise the same disciplines to win entry to this super-sensory world before a science for higher consciousness and extrasensory perception can come into being.

"In the Human Psyche," says Toynbee, "there are two organs: a conscious, volitional surface and a sub-conscious, non-volitional abyss. Each of these two organs has its own way of looking at, and peering through, the dark glass that screens Reality from Man's inward eye and, in screening it, dimly reveals it; and therefore each mode of the imperfect apprehension calls its findings 'the Truth.' "[36]

In the words of J.R. Oppenheimer, "These two ways of thinking, the way of time and history and the way of eternity and timelessness, are both parts of man's efforts to comprehend the world in which he lives. Neither is comprehended in the other nor reducible to it. They are, as we have learned to say in physics, complementary views, each supplementing the other, neither telling the whole story."[48]

Maslow interprets the mystics' apprehension of the cosmos as a single unity in another way. Commenting on

the experience of Dr. Bucke, as mentioned in the latter's work, "Cosmic Consciousness", he writes:

> "Also useful would be Bucke's use of cosmic consciousness. This is a special phenomenological state in which the person somehow perceives the whole cosmos or, at least, the unity and integration of it and of everything in it, including his Self. He then feels as if he belongs by right in the cosmos. He becomes one of the family rather than an orphan. He comes inside rather than being outside looking in. He feels simultaneously small because of the vastness of the universe, but also an important being because he is there in it by absolute right..."[31]

The modern thinking on this important issue, as we have seen, is divided and confused. What, however, the intelligent mind still fails to grasp and investigate is that the human brain is yet in a state of progressive transformation. The object of this transformation is to enhance the intellect and, at the same time, to create another channel of perception through which the areas of creation not perceptible to our senses can be apprehended to make it possible for the mortal to understand better the world in which he lives.

There is no other explanation for the appearance of genius, with its products and creations, all tending to extend the area of man's knowledge, to increase his sensibilities, to improve his aesthetic sense and to refine his emotions in a wholesome way. Time after time,

during the past thousands of years, extraordinary individuals have been born who, in one branch of knowledge or the other, or in one art or the other, excelled the rest, discovered new truths, made fresh discoveries, created new masterpieces of art and found new methods for a happier social or political life of man, lifting the race higher and higher up towards a target which is still beyond our sight. We have failed to allot its due place to this phenomenon of genius, because we suppose it to be a chance occurrence and not a deliberate measure of racial consciousness to upgrade the human mind, step by step and inch by inch, to reach the summit ordained for it. These geniuses have been eccentric, abnormal, or even insane because they, as well as the world, have been in ignorance of the fact that, with every advance gained in the organic evolution of the brain, a more healthy and disciplined life is necessary for the individual to adapt his enhanced sensibility to the battle of life, an inseparable part of his earthly existence.

Similarly, the illuminated mind has also been a regular feature of human life, at least, since the Vedas. There is every likelihood that, in different guises and under different names, this class of human beings has been a feature of human life for thousands of years even prior to the Vedas. Their role has been to draw the attention of their contemporaries to the invisible divine element in the universe, the existence of a Creator and the righteous life that must be led to reach Him or to rise

from the profane to the holy to achieve liberation of the soul. "In the born mystic these powers are great, and lie very near the normal threshold of consciousness" explains Evelyn Underhill.[49]

"He has a genius for transcendental—or as he would say, divine—discovery in much the same way as his cousins, the born musician and poet, have a genius for musical or poetic discovery. In all three cases, the emergence of these higher powers is mysterious, and not least so to those who experience it. Psychology on the one hand, theology on the other, may offer us diagrams and theories of this proceeding: of the strange oscillations of the developing consciousness, the fitful visitations of a lucidity and creative power over which the self has little or no control, the raptures and griefs of a vision by turns granted and withdrawn. But the secret of genius still eludes us, as the secret of life eludes the biologist."[49]

"The utmost we can say of such persons is," continues Underhill "that reality presents itself to them under abnormal conditions and in abnormal terms, and that subject to these conditions and in these terms they are bound to deal with it. Thanks to their peculiar mental make up, one aspect of the universe is for them focussed so sharply that in comparison with it all other images are blurred, vague, and unreal. Hence the sacrifice which men of genius—mystics, artists, inventors—make of their

whole lives to this one Object, this one vision of truth, is not self-denial, but rather self-fulfilment. They gather themselves up from the unreal, in order to concentrate on the real. The whole personality then absorbs or enters into communion with certain rhythms or harmonies existent in the universe, which the receiving apparatus of other selves cannot take up."[50]

Both the genius and the enlightened mind have thus fulfilled two separate and distinct purposes related to the life of man. The former assiduously provided him with more knowledge of the world, trained his senses, improved his intellect, cultivated his aesthetic sense and moulded his life in a manner to afford him greater happiness and plenty of leisure to make the best use of his brief sojourn on earth. The latter provided him with ideals, exalted his feelings, inculcated noble virtues and love, pruned his animal propensities, as a preparation for a more elevated and happy life. With the joint efforts of both these classes, the race has progressed intellectually, emotionally, morally and spiritually. The result has been that the barbarian who dwelt on the earth for hundreds of thousand years, was moulded into a cultured and polished specimen we see today. What would be the position of mankind if these two complementary classes of human beings had not appeared to act their parts, even in face of extreme hardship, ridicule, contempt, persecution, torture, and, sometimes, martyrdom, it is not hard to imagine.

The paeleolethic creature would still be prowling in search of game. We are usually not conscious of the transition we have undergone through the devoted efforts of these two classes because our attention has seldom been drawn to the Cosmic Law that brings them into being.

Some scholars of our time have been more occupied in exposing the frailties and weaknesses of great western geniuses and digging up evidence to establish their unbalanced mental constitutions than in acknowledging their greatness. Those who assiduously set themselves upon this task, perhaps, never analyzed their own motives for doing so. The illuminated too, have been the victims of this dissection by those as little informed about the real nature of the phenomenon as a rustic. For instance, here is an example of it from the pen of E.S. Ames:

> "It is of great importance historically that the Apostle Paul and St. Augustine belonged to the type for which the extreme form of emotional dramatic conversion is possible. Their personal experience has been regarded as of superior value because it has been assumed uncritically that their moral characters and achievements were determined by the manner of their conversion. But when it is recognized that Paul was probably a neurotic, and that Augustine was a sensualist, with a highly developed nervous temperament, it becomes apparent that there were very

special individual reasons for their dramatic conversions."[50]

Similarly in his study of St. Teresa, George Godwin writes, "In 'The Castle', St. Teresa describes the seven mansions through which the devotee passes on the way to perfect union with the Deity. It is the way of prayer, of perfect union or spiritual marriage. And it is notable that this progress is along lines analogous to earthly love, with courtship, betrothal, marriage, and the final consummation."[51]

In support of this conclusion, Godwin says, "This mystical union of human bride with divine groom was one mechanism by means of which St. Teresa kept her reason. Significant is the circumstance that it was necessary to find also a human figure upon which to focus her tremendous libido. Significantly, she chose St. Joseph for this role; St. Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary." Godwin adds further, "James sees the saint as 'a voluble egotist, one of those whose religion seems to have been that of an endless amatory flirtation—if one may say so without irreverence—between devotee and the Deity...there is absolutely no human use in her, or sign of any general human interest.' "[51]

"Writing forty years later, another psychologist, R.H. Thouless (Introduction to the Psychology of Religion), remarks of James's reactions to Teresa as prototype of traditional sainthood: "It is not difficult, in reading James's work, to see what is wrong. He has

found himself absolutely unable to enter into a conception of religion in which the ideal is not a moral one at all.' " At another place, Godwin writes, "The imagery of the writing of St. Teresa is everywhere erotic, and gives us the measure of the sexual urges she strove throughout her sexually active period to subdue, or, to use the Freudian term, to sublimate."[52]

Alas for the intellect. All these criticisms and controversies of the learned stem from one simple fact—they have no correct conception at all about the real nature of mystical experience. The world is sadly in lack of knowledge of a profound phenomenon which is carrying the whole race towards the same state of cognition that has been the prerogative of the great mystics of past and present. Why erotic imagery has always been associated with mystical experience, and why the pleasure derived in ecstacy and in the climax of the erotic embrace are alike is because the organ of procreation and evolution is the same. Nature has taken recourse to the only possible way to prolong indefinitely the continued metamorphosis of the human brain. The tremendous energy contained in the human seed, when directed downward and outward, brings an offspring to life, and, when directed inwards and upwards, provides the indispensable stimulation and nourishment to the brain needed for its organic evolution until a transformed personality, in tune with supersensory planes, comes into being.

7

CONTINUED EVOLUTION A VERIFIABLE FACT

The current theories of evolution have no explanation to offer for the development of abstract thought in man. The Neanderthal type could survive very well with a strong physical frame and only a bit of intelligence sufficient to allow him the use of stone implements and weapons for offence and defence both. We can only ascribe intelligence to an unexpected departure from the course evolution followed until the appearance of the primates. After that, everything relating to man is a mystery that has not been solved so far.

The complacent attitude of the learned which seems to suggest that sufficient study has been made of human behaviour to jusitfy certain conclusions about the nature of the human mind is gravely mistaken. The one single factor of continued evolution towards a definite target, the moment it is proved, will act like a bolt from the blue on the views expressed in thousands of bulky volumes by

the scholars of our day. This single discovery will render obsolete whole libraries of books on philosophy and science written in our time. A new direction will be given to human thought and a new world of study and research open beyond the present horizons of science.

As in the case of reason, cosmic consciousness is a predetermined target for human evolution. Reason has come as a precursor to a more expanded state of consciousness in which other planes of creation become perceptible. Without his intelligence, man could never overcome the natural disabilities under which all other forms of life have to labour. In that case, the human species could never succeed in creating the cultural and aesthetic environment, with all its peace, security, leisure, beauty, protection from climatic rigor, shelter and satisfactory provision for all basic needs, indispensable for the further evolution of the brain. Exclusion of reason from the province of faith and withdrawal from the world have been two great errors made by religion, that have led to periods of stagnation in the progress of mankind. The excessive occupation of science with material objectives and its irrational prejudice against the concepts and ideals of faith can prove no less a barrier in the holistic advance of humanity.

The gulf between the animal and the human mind is so unbridgeable that it makes one shudder to imagine what would be one's state if born as a dumb creature forced to live in the same unaesthetic way as animals do. It is the

gulf between the normal live of human beings and the ecstacy of the mystic, that has led many among the great illuminate to grieve over the state of those denied the glorious vision of liberated consciousness. The intelligent mind, bent under a heavy load of learning, has no conception whatsoever of what liberated consciousness means. It is not, therefore, possible for him to imagine the height from which the prophet or the mystic speaks.

The moment it is empirically demonstrated that illumination, with its concomitant state of revelation, proceeds from a more evolved condition of the human brain, there is sure to occur a revolution in the whole sphere of science and philosophy that can change the entire structure of the human world. The inference then would be irresistible that a new faculty, superior to reason, is the purpose of nature to allow man access to supersensory regions of creation which are, at present, shut out from his view. If the human race is inching its way towards a more expanded state of consciousness, a reorientation of all human activity and thought must then become inevitable.

There is a great deal in the more common phenomenon of inspiration that has been entirely overlooked by modern scholars. It is an almost universally admitted fact that, in the case of genius, the discoveries made, the music composed, the poetry written, the plan of a story or the idea of a work of art often occur in instantaneous flashes with a speed and vividness that surprise the

recipients of the gift. The modern scholar complacently ascribes these sudden intuitions and inspirations to the activity of the subconscious and worries no more about it. What makes the phenomenon important is that these flashes from the subconscious have been available only to a selected few during the past thousands of years, and not the vast majority. Why? Have we been able to locate factors at the bottom of this difference? If not, what makes us believe that the explanation is correct?

Autopsies done on the brains of geniuses have, so far, yielded no clue to the mystery of the extraordinary talent displayed. If the subconscious theory of inspiration or intuition were correct, then even mediocre men and women could experience the electrifying change of mood and be prone to occasional brief spells of creativity that bears the stamp of genius. But this has never been the case. The only other class that exhibits this spontaneous flow, at times, is of mediums capable of automatic writing or drawing. But this phenomenon is somewhat different from that of inspiration peculiar to geniuses and mystics. In all these three categories, namely, the illuminated, the geniuses and the mediums, the very constitution of the mind is different from that of people. For this reason, they have been a source of wonder and bewilderment to the rest for the past thousands of years. They have been honoured; deified; persecuted, like Galileo; and even martyred, like Giordano Bruno, because the common mind could never understand the

source of their gift, their power, their passion or their fire.

The almost universal belief that reason is the highest mental gift of nature to man, entertained for the past thousands of years, is the cause of the error under which the learned of our day are labouring in the expression of their views about genius and mediumistic gifts. Reason is not the last gift of nature to man. The illuminate, the geniuses and the mediums are all standing witnesses to a phenomenon that has been either misinterpreted or ignored so far. It has still to be understood that these three categories of human beings represent a marvellous effort of nature, carried on from generation to generation before our very eyes, to provide the human race with another faculty which, in conjunction with reason, can highly enhance the powers of observation of our soul.

The evolution of the human brain is irreversible. The world is unaware of a mighty ferment going on in man's cranium to build a more evolved organ perceptive of the luminous planes of Universal Consciousness. The law ruling this evolution is inexorable and its operation completely beyond the power of man to modify or alter according to his own choice. At every moment in our lives, action and reaction take place between the forces of evolution and our voluntary acts in a manner incomprehensible to the human intellect. At every moment, there is a battle between the God and animal in man in which the former has to emerge victorious at the end.

The warnings contained in the religious scriptures of mankind about the torments awaiting the rebels and transgressors of faith are not without a rational basis. All human effort, which violates the laws of evolution, reacts adversely and the result of this adverse reaction is transmitted from generation to generation. There are wide margins of safety, but when the limit is exceeded, the accumulated harvest of evil actions becomes operative at one time or the other.

It is almost universally admitted now that man has risen from a lower form of life through evolution that has worked for billions of years. There is sufficient archeological evidence to support this theory. The conditions under which man has lived during the glacial period and prior to that, are so savage and barbaric in comparison to his, later, civilized life that no doubt is possible about the obvious conclusion that he has slowly ascended from an animalistic mode of life to a cultured existence. It is obvious that a process of evolution has been going on during the past hundreds of thousand years. There can be no mistake about it, and the evolutionists are ready to accept the fact. But, by some strange trick of fate, they are not prepared to accept the equally patent fact that this evolution from barbarism to culture could not be possible without a corresponding transformation of the brain.

It is, precisely, at this point that the learned stop dead, and are not prepared to listen to any argument that their stand is wrong. If man has risen to his present stature by a

continued process of evolution, operating for millions of years, how have we come to the conclusion that this organic evolution has come to a stop and he is stranded forever at the place he has reached? There is no appreciable difference between the shape or size of the human skull, as it exists now, or as it existed at the time of the Cro-Magnon type of man, more than 20,000 years ago. But we have no evidence that the brain has remained the same. We have no evidence even now that, in its microscopic depths, the brain of a modern man is the same as that of an Egyptian in the Dynastic period, or the same as it was in the hey-day of Romans and Greeks. Scientists have only assumed without a single shred of positive evidence that the organic evolution of the human encephalon has come to an end. They have assumed it even before acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the brain itself. It is a mere presumption as fallacious as the theory that life has been born by accident—a premise by which Reason loses its own credibility as a bastard of chance.

The discoveries made during the last few decades about the brain, as for instance, the reticular formation and the varied functions of the two hemispheres, and the mounting evidence of psychic phenomena should have proved sufficient to make biologists and psychologists pause in their dogmatic assertions about the capacity of the human brain or the nature of the human mind. There is nothing in our present knowledge about man to preclude the premise that the organic evolution of Homo

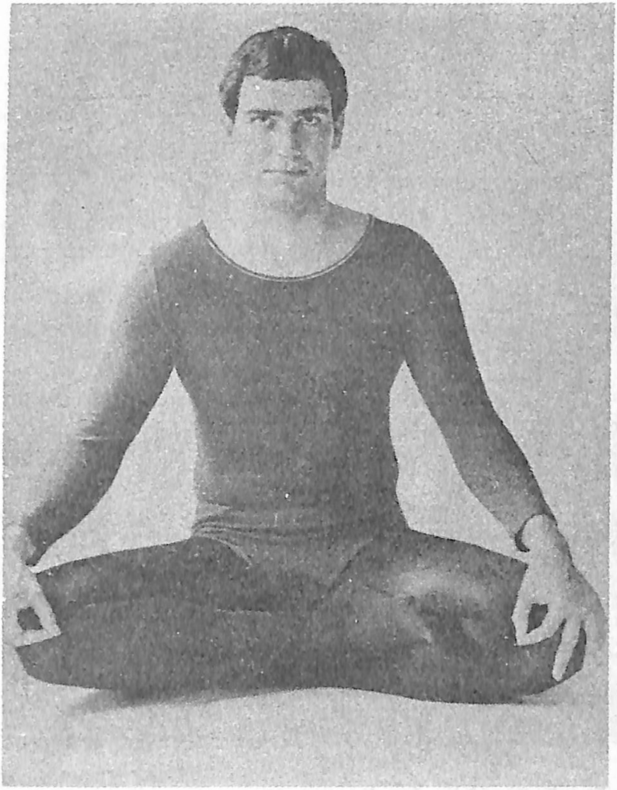
sapiens has not come to a standstill or that there exists a possibility for a reverse activity of the reproductive organs, leading to an upward flow of sex-energy into the brain. The general apathy towards the acceptance of the view stems from the fact that to academicians the idea is completely new, without any authoritative support behind it and, secondly, because the grave consequences of lack of knowledge about it and the damage that this ignorance can do to the race, are not before their eye.

The final aim of evolution is to raise the human species to a level of cognition, where the world of mind or consciousness becomes perceptive to the individual, as plainly as the world of matter discerned through the senses. This is not an easy achievement. An organic readjustment of the brain and the nervous system, while the individual, in whom the change is occurring, frets and fumes, storms and rages, or grieves and sighs, is a task so delicate, difficult and hazardous, it is no wonder that perfectly evolved specimens have been extremely rare. This extremely delicate and complex process continues generation after generation. And this is the reason for the faults and blemishes found in the mental constitution of the evolved specimens who bloomed as prophets, mystics, or geniuses. The ecstasies of the former provide but a distant sample of the glorious plane of being towards which humanity is ascending imperceptibly through evolution of the brain. For the completely evolved individuals of the coming race, Cosmic Consciousness

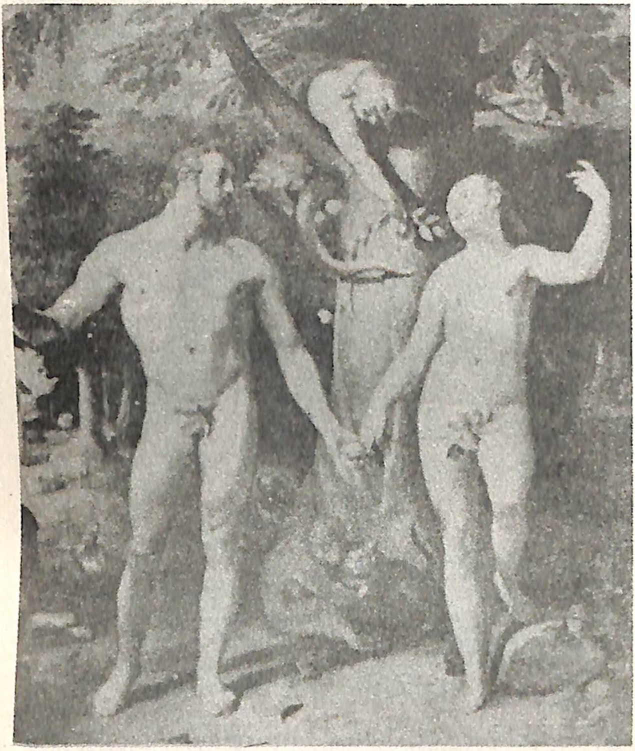
will be the normal state of awareness in the same way as the state of consciousness of our day represents the normal state of awareness of every member of the race.

I know what I am stating has never been said before. Enlightenment and mystical experience have all along been held to be intimate encounters with Divinity or rapturous spells of union with God or a Celestial Being. The presumption has been that human intelligence represents the last limit to which embodied life can reach, and that a state of consciousness above it could only be that of God. It has seldom been clearly acknowledged that human intelligence is but an intermediary state of life between the instinct-bound animal at the bottom of the scale and a Cosmic Conscious species, superior to man, at the top. This idea of continued evolution of the brain, as far as I know, has seldom struck the philosopher or the scientist or even the mystic who, at times, experienced the transporting interludes of the same consciousness that has to be the common endowment of the man to come. It needed a Revelation to make the Law known.

The reason why mystical ecstasy, Samadhi or Turiya, as it is called in India, has been mistaken for the vision of God or union with the Creator is because of the universal error that the normal human mind represents the highest level of consciousness possible on earth. The error is explainable in the light of the very nature of mind itself. As we know, every individual mind is a water-tight



Yoga student in meditation



The Fall of Man by Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem

compartment and has no direct perception of another mind. A person of low intelligence can, within himself, never accurately imagine the mind of an intellectual. If he could, he would, for that brief interval of time, himself, cogitate like the latter. A God-fearing, honest man can never fully understand the mind of a criminal nor can the latter form a correct picture of the scrupulous mind of the former. A backward dweller in an inaccessible part of Australia or Africa, still out of touch with civilization and its achievements, would not be able to envision the gulf of difference between himself and the passers-by, when visiting a modern town, for the simple reason that he cannot frame an estimate of their intelligence.

It is this isolated nature of the individual mind, and its inability to imagine an intelligence superior to its own, which is at the bottom of the common error that has prevailed among the learned, during all periods of history, that except for God, Celestial Beings, Seraphs, Devas, Angels, etc., there is no species of earthly beings superior to man. Nor has there been any idea that man is biologically evolving to blossom as a Seraph himself. There has not even been a suspicion of what I am trying, with all the emphasis at my command, to make known that every experience of illumination, enlightenment, encounter with God or union with the Divine has provided a passing glimpse of the next higher state of consciousness, destined for the human race in the ages to come, and that the human brain is evolving unalterably to

achieve this goal.

The gulf between the animal and the human mind is so vast it can be safely said that the two live in two radically different worlds, which are poles apart. The sudden transition of the mind of a beast to that of a man would be a shattering experience for the former, far more than that which marks the shift from the normal human to mystical consciousness. The animal mind knows only what is immediately present before its senses and reacts to that instinctively without the sort of abstract reasoning which humans use. It has absolutely no capacity, in the narrow periphery of its awareness, to accommodate the enormously extended world of human knowledge and experience. Compared to the animal mind the human consciousness is a vast its awareness, to accommodate the enormously extended world of human knowledge and experience. Compared to the animal mind the human consciousness is a vast lake, whose other bank is out of sight, and the former a small puddle of rain water by the roadside. In the mystical ecstacy, our mind takes another leap and, instead of the lake, appears like an ocean. There is nothing miraculous or supernatural in this transition. Illuminated consciousness represents only a further extension of the great change that has already occurred in our mind from the animal to the human level. We find it difficult to accept the position because the idea has been mooted for the first time. Otherwise, considering the distance already travelled by man from the animal to

the human state, the next lap of the journey from the human to the super-human plane is only a natural sequence to the causal events that have already taken place. The idea causes us surprise and even incredulity because we have never given our thought to this possibility.

There is a sense of holiness associated with mystical experience or, to speak more correctly, the experience of future human consciousness, because it represents another step in the ascent of the soul towards knowledge of its own Infinitude. We have no idea of the higher forms of embodied life dwelling in the universe. In the light of the transformation experienced in mystical ecstacy, the conclusion becomes obvious that the human mind does not represent the last limit to which embodied life can rise; but there might well be millions of forms of life in the universe, as superior to man as the latter is to the countless species constituting the organic kingdom of the earth. We find it hard to accept this position because, for us, the universe, with all the wonders which astronomy has revealed, is real and lasting. We do not know that all this colossal display is the product of our brains, animated by the mysterious Power of Life, which is our Soul and the Universe both. There can be embodied life built of other materials, formed by the same mysterious stuff, with other types of brains and sensory organs, presenting a different image of the cosmos. Hence, we are not cognizant of them nor they of us.

Our observation of the universe reveals billions upon

billions of stars, each one of which is a sun comparable to our own orb of light. The galaxy containing our solar system exists as a single unit. There are millions of similar galaxies in the cosmos and all this staggering host of suns and planets is bound by the same laws from one end to the other. Opinion is divided among astronomers whether there is life, similar to our own, existing in other parts of the universe, or the glowing firmament, dotted with countless points of light, seen at night, is, but a desert composed of burning suns and barren planets, one vast wilderness of insentient matter, enduring for billions of years, why and wherefore no one can say. Such a conclusion makes the human race a freak product in an otherwise lifeless creation, and the human mind the chance product of an evolutionary process that might have no parallel in any other part of space.

There are astronomers who hold that conditions similar to those on the earth could occur in millions of planets, in other parts of the universe, and the chances are that civilized life, similar or superior to our own, might be existing in other areas of the cosmos. There are other astronomers who contest this view. In the light of the fact that colossal distances, extending from a few to millions of light years, separate our solar system from other suns and planets, the chances of gaining accurate information about forms of life, in other areas of space, their physiognomy and the state of their perception are extremely remote.

Even our current study of the cosmos, with the methods used at present, cannot be said to be conclusive. There are bodies in space, as for instance black holes, about which we can only speculate. But the habit of the human mind to jump to conclusions and to live under the constant delusion that what it knows now denotes the last limit of knowledge, is as prevalent in science as it has been in philosophy and religion in the past. It is possible, even probable, that more powerful telescopes, than are in use at present, might reveal new data that would oblige astronomers and scientists to revise their present-day concepts of matter and space, and to put forward other theories to account for the phenomena. But, so long as this does not happen, the leading astronomers and scientists would continue to flood the world with ideas and speculations that might ultimately be proved to have been premature and wrong.

One important lesson which the modern theories about space, time and the cosmos tend to impart is that, in the last analysis, matter disappears into energy and there its behaviour, from the human point of view, is unpredictable. There are physicists and astronomers who believe that, at the basic levels of matter, the observed phenomena cannot be isolated from the observer. This means, in other words, that the human mind or consciousness is an inseparable part of all we observe, measure, analyze, or speculate about in the universe. This idea about the objective universe brings the present-

day concepts about matter in line with the state of unity and homogeneity observed in mystical experience.

In drawing attention to this similarity between the concepts of physics and the experience in the Unitive state, it is not my intention to show that the two are one, as has been attempted in some works. The two can never be one for the reason that physical science, even when most abstract, can only deal with sensory experience, while mystical vision denotes the perception of a Reality which is beyond the senses. My reason in drawing attention to these modern concepts of physics is different. What I intend to show is that since, according to the latest concepts about matter, the observer and the observed phenomena cannot be isolated from each other, the conclusion becomes clear that the universe, we see around, with all its colour, light, shade, mass, speed, inertia, time and space is a product of the senses and the mind, and has no reality apart and away from them. What it is in reality we can never know for the simple reason that whatever we know must come through our mind, and the moment it comes through our mind, it ceases to be what it really is apart from us. The evolved state of perception that comes into play in mystical experience makes us clearly cognizant of this fact.

8

REVELATION THE GREATEST BLESSING IN MY LIFE

The ideas I am expressing about the continued organic evolution of the human brain are not the product of study of Western or Eastern books on philosophy and science. As far as I know, this hypothesis to account for the visionary experiences and the revelations of the founders of current faiths or for the superb creations of geniuses has never been put forward before. I am not mentioning this to claim any distinction, but only to emphasize the fact that this discovery of a still hidden law of nature has not come into my hands by learning, hearsay or by some experimental study of the brain, but by Grace and Grace alone. The knowledge has been taught to me, day after day and night after night, for the last more than 40 years, in a manner that is incredible, and which I would never believe possible had not the whole episode occurred to me in person, providing all the empirical data for the conclusion I have drawn.

In most cases, this Grace from heaven descends in the form of a Vision or of highly enhanced awareness or of Revelation, genius, and inspiration or of miraculous intervention at times of acute danger or of grave crisis in one's life or in deadly accidents where the aim is to save. Hence we have the unaccountable cases of recovery from incurable illness, of incredible, narrow escapes from mortal danger or unexplainable survival in fatal accidents. But, unbelievable as it might appear, in my case, during this long course of more than 40 years, visions, inspirations, revelations, miraculous interventions at times of grave crisis or deadly threat to my life, have all occurred in a manner that would appear normal, accidental or the result of rare combinations of circumstances, or unique synchronicities to a skeptic viewing them objectively from a distance. But for me, who has been a mute witness to all this long chain of revelations, narrow escapes, sudden insights or unexpected succour in dire situations, the whole episode partakes of Grace from the start to this moment.

But for Grace, this knowledge could never come to a poorly educated person of humble origin, whose childhood was spent in rustic surroundings in company with other urchins who, in later life, waded, barebacked, knee-deep in watered rice fields to clear the weeds, or spent the day with their flocks in the meadows nearby. For all this period of more than four decades, I have watched critically the transformation of my own consciousness by

stages attended, in the first phase of more than 12 years, by a ferment in my body caused by a highly increased metabolic activity for which, at that time, I could not account at all. The secret of this continued evolution of the brain was not disclosed to me in a flash, but like a subject, under study in a laboratory, I was made to witness my own transmutation from a normal state of consciousness to the one I am blessed with at present.

Heaven alone knows how critically I have studied myself, how meticulous has been my observation of the abnormal behaviour of my body, that lasted for years, and how skeptical I have been of the incredible episodes that attended my transition from one to another state of awareness. When I read the works of great scientists, scholars and philosophers and notice, at times, on what a fragile base or on what shaky evidence or insufficient data some of them have erected vast edifices of thought or drawn momentous conclusions or formulated widely accepted theories to explain certain phenomena of nature, I feel that the rigorous examination to which I have subjected myself, my body and my mind, should prove more than sufficient to confirm the conclusions at which I have arrived. Critical self-analysis is one of the basic tenets of yoga. A science of which the ultimate aim is to prove empirically, by a rise in the level of consciousness, that the sensual image of the universe and Reason's interpretation of it are deceptive, could not be built on a hollow base. A thorough self-scrutiny forms a part of the

discipline from the start.

I am convinced that it was not an accident that made me meditate daily from the age of 17 with a stiff course of self-discipline that lasted for years. But for these strenuous daily exercises done to subdue my nature and to round my angularities, I could have never survived the inexplicable, sudden ups and downs that occurred in my system. The sudden release of a powerful current of the Kundalini force can cause a poisoned condition of the nerves, parallel to that caused by a virulent disease, and the appetite is lost. In fact, the mere sight of food may cause nausea. I had no appetite for weeks and months, yet with the sheer exercise of my will, I forced myself to eat the food I had prescribed for myself, at regular times, even when my stomach strongly revolted against it. At times, after a period of complete abstention, for months, I felt an overpowering erotic desire, yet, knowing that my state was too critical to indulge, I firmly suppressed the urge until it ceased to torment me. This strict regimen in food and regulation of my other urges and appetites that I followed, day in and day out, for years completely ignoring taste, preference, desire and pressure was something I could never do had I not attained a firm hold on myself.

In an unbelievably precarious state of mind, I continued to act as my own physician. I cannot understand what power in me boosted my strength so that I persistently refused to agree to the counsels of my family and friends

to seek medical advice. If I had done so, I would not be alive today. Let me cite here but one out of the numerous episodes relating to this perennial discord between me and suggestions for conventional treatment. In this case I first submitted to the advice of my family.

Once at the suggestion of my wife, we made a pilgrimage to a famous shrine, known as Tulla-mulla, in Kashmir. It is a small spring on a tiny islet surrounded by river water. It is associated with Goddess Khirbhawani, a patron Deity. We went there with a large party of friends in three large-sized boats (called house-boats) by the river Jhelum, which passes through the middle of the beautiful valley. The pilgrimage lasted five days. For most of this period, I had to subsist purely on a diet not suited to me in that peculiar metabolic state of my body. The result was that, on our return home, I fell ill with an acute digestive disorder. As usual, I resisted the attempts of my family to call in a medical doctor. But soon my condition became serious.

On the entreaty of my wife, I finally agreed to be examined. A physician was called in. He prescribed some medicine and asked my family to allow me only boiled rice and vegetable soup till I felt better. That night I had no sleep whatsoever and my condition became so grave that my family was seriously alarmed and wanted to have the advice of one or two other physicians. I firmly forbade them to do so. At about noon, just like the night when I passed the first grave crisis, I suddenly asked my

wife to prepare a strongly spiced special dish for me with a few breads bought fresh from the baker and serve it to me immediately. In the condition I was such a request would have appeared sheer lunacy to a clinician. She, too, hesitated at first and then complied with my wish.

As if by magic, the pain was soon over and I was fast asleep in my bed. This sudden intuitive choice of a particular kind of food, during the whole course of my experience, has been a peculiar feature of my life after the awakening. It is still my panacea in any attack of illness that I might have. My nervous system has become so sensitive that I have to be very careful with medicines. In emphasizing this fact, my aim is to show that a marvelous fount of ambrosial power that can heal, grant longevity, high talent, magnetism and the Beatific Vision already exists in the corporeal frame of man. It is almost always a change in my diet which helps me to overcome distemper, loss of sleep or effect of climatic extremes.

I do not believe it was my failure in the examination that drove me to a meditative life. The urge came up from within. The failure in the examination only served to focus my attention on it. When I now look back at the period of my life from the age of 17 to 34, I clearly see the hand of destiny working to create the circumstances favourable for the purpose I had to fulfill. I had no choice in my marriage. It was settled by my mother and the family in which I was to marry chosen by her. I never saw my wife until the day of the wedding, and had no idea how

our married life would turn out. Yet I sincerely feel now that heaven had already chosen a partner ideally suited to help me through the ordeals I had to face. She is not educated and cannot even write her name. I wonder if she, even now, fully understands the significance of the astounding transformation I underwent, helped all through by her constant love, attention and care. Despite her lack of education, she acted intuitively in the most appropriate way in critical situations to make my trials and tribulations as smooth and easy as she could. I do not know what decree of Fate brought us together. The fact is there to show how the Grace of heaven acted to create the circumstances most suited to the experiment for which I was destined.

Both on the first occasion of my long illness and then, again, on the second, narrated in my autobiography[52], the officers under whom I was serving were so kind-hearted and generous that they allowed me leave of absence with full salary. On the second occasion, the officer, a well-known educationist in India, asked the office not to burden me with any work, and to send it to him directly for disposal. I was very poor and if this concession had not been allowed, on both the occasions, with full security for the tenure of my service, I might not have remained absent until I recouped and joined earlier at risk to my health.

I was 34 years of age, in the full bloom of my prime, when the awakening occurred, yet it created a cataclysmic

upheaval in me. Considering the strain and stress, I bore during the first few years, I feel certain that had the awakening occurred later on in life, the chances were that I would not survive. Though I had no knowledge about Kundalini, I intuitively felt from the very first day of the arousal that it was an extraordinary experience, and I had won to some sort of a divine vision mentioned in our religious scriptures. The experience was so extraordinary that it overshadowed completely all that had happened in my life in the past. It eclipsed all the adventures, all the episodes, all the thrills, all the sensations, all the pleasures, and all the delights that had fallen to my share prior to this momentous occurrence. It was this realization which made me more alert to my mental condition, and gave me a clue to the possibility that the turbulence in my system might be the direct outcome of this memorable event.

Call it coincidence or, again, call it Grace, our office, at that time, functioned in winter at Jammu and in summer at Srinagar. Jammu is hot with the temperature ranging up to 44° C and even more in summer. Kashmir is like Europe with an extremely cold winter. By staying for six months of winter in Jammu and six months of summer in Srinagar, I was saved the rigor of cold and heat which could have been disastrous for me during the extremely critical periods. Apart from the mental whirlpool in which I was caught, the course of my life went smooth, and I had nothing to worry about or strive

The Dance of Shepards by Rubens

The Holy Family by Michelangelo

against save the precarious state of my own mind. In this period, guidance often came to me in intuitive flashes during the day and in dreams during the night. There occurred, at least, a dozen occasions when my life hung by a thread and the slightest error could prove fatal. But every time and, sometimes, at the very last moment, guidance came to turn death into a more enchanting life than before.

The serious nature of the crises, through which I have passed, has been due to the fact that no detailed or precise information is available about the symptoms, that follow a sudden awakening, either in ancient traditions or from the written treatises. The whole phenomenon is shrouded in mystery. It has always been regarded with wonder and awe throughout the past, and ascribed to the influence of divine forces over which one could have no control. Myriads must have lost their sanity or forfeited their life in the gamble with death, which follows on a sudden arousal of Kundalini. The ascetics and anchorites in India, who undertake the hazardous Hatha Yoga practises, in secluded ashrams and hermitages, to arouse the power, often know very well the price they may have to pay. But the urge to self-transcendence in them is sometimes greater than the desire to live. This has been the case with mystics, too. Compared to the glory of the Vision for which they longed, their love of life was, for them, less impertant of the two.

The first sure indication that a radical change had

occurred in my cognitive apparatus came, when a look at the clear sky and a large building in front brought the enhanced beauty and grandeur of the spectacle vividly before my sight. A fresh image of the same scene, as it looked to me earlier, was clearly present in my memory. Now it was definitely altered and its alluring charm had such a fascination that from that day to this the wonder of it is never absent from my mind. It is this incredible feature of my transformation that has led me to the conclusion that the brain is involved in this metamorphosis. If this change had persisted for a few days or weeks and I had relapsed to my old way of seeing the same objects, I could have easily ascribed the alteration to a delusion or to a change in chemistry brought about somehow in my system. But that regression to the former state of perception never occurred. On the contrary, the beauty of the vision continued to increase, the lustre I perceived at every place and round every object became more and more alluring, and the feeling that I am contemplating a heavenly vista, surrounded by the glory of an Omnipresent, Infinite Intelligence, grew more and more pronounced every day. After the effect of alcohol, LSD, marijuana, opium or other drugs is over, there is a rapid or gradual return to the normal mental state, with a lingering effect of the drug, which is not usually very pleasant. It can even be very unpleasant at times. The state of expanded, luminous consciousness, which I possess at present, is as constant and steady as the

normal state of awareness of every human being.

I still have an ego but much pruned and chastened, and my heart has become much warmer and more loving than before. I still am a normal human being, humbled by the experiences I have undergone. But that is not all. This individual "I" in me is encompassed by a Mighty Intelligence — a boundless Ocean of Life — so close to me that I see it in my own small, frail, human self, as if it is this Almighty Intelligence which is the real "I" behind my ego, and yet infinitely above and beyond. Almost every day, at one time or the other, I am lost in the wonder of my own existence. One Almighty, All-seeing and All-knowing Intelligence, serene and unmoved, like the firm bed of a surging ocean, dwells in me and in everything round me, yet so ethereal and elusive that I am never able to contemplate or to grasp it to my heart's content. One instant, it is there as my very soul, and the next I am my old self again wondering whether what I perceived was real, when, all of a sudden, I see it outside spread from one end of my field of vision to the other.

My journey to this state has been long, hazardous and painful, but the fruit it has borne has compensated a million times over for the travail and suffering I endured. I am lost in wonder, when, in silence, while contemplating the whole panorama of my life from a child to this day, I ask myself by what inscrutable Grace of Heaven, this frail body and this poor spirit were chosen for an experiment to Reveal a Secret of Life for which the time

has come. From this point of view, my life has been a fairy-tale. Bit by bit I shall narrate the whole story as it comes to my mind. It is so interwoven with what we can only call "providential" that there now exists not the least shadow of doubt in my mind that an inscrutable Power guides the destiny of all human beings and what we call accidents are but connecting links in an unmeasurably long chain of which we neither see the beginning nor the end.

When I think of it, I am amazed at the way in which, for years, I have been assiduously trained to write in prose or verse. Everything came from the depths of my own transformed consciousness, but it was monitored by some other will than my own. A higher personality has been guiding the whole operation. I erred and blundered because, at times, I failed to grasp the hints or was mistaken in my interpretation of them. I seldom know what I have to write when I start a book. I even do not form a plan for it before I start to write. The same is the case with my poems. A young psychologist, the author of a number of books on consciousness, when told of my newly acquired talent in verse, made the scholarly comment that it did not impress him at all as the ability to write a few verses was a poor compensation for all the ordeals and suffering I had undergone.

Another learned scholar expressed the view that the poetry was too poor to be treated as inspired or equated

with the compositions of great poets. I do not challenge their verdicts. They might be right from their own point of view. But both of them have missed the real point, which is of tremendous importance for me. The fall of an apple started a chain of thinking in the mind of Newton that led finally to his formulation of the theory of relativity. The appearance of this talent, at a late stage in my life, when I had absolutely no taste for poetry and no knowledge of prosody, started a chain of thinking which has led to the conclusion that Kundalini is the source behind talent and genius. This fact has been known in India for thousands of years. But the discovery, at this moment, has a significance and a value that can put all other discoveries, made during recent times, into shade, for it opens the way to voluntary cultivation of genius and the possibility of the beatific vision that have been only dreams so far.

In order to be meticulously accurate in my narrations of this extraordinary experience and the state of perception or talents to which it has led, I have been virtually studying myself as a Guinea Pig, on which an experiment has been made, to draw conclusions after repeated observation of the data. Except for its mention in the Indian scriptural lore, a perennially illuminated state of transformed consciousness in a human being would appear incredible even to those who believe in periodic spells of mystical ecstacy. But what I state is simple,

unadulterated truth. I could deceive a body of observers appointed to examine me, but I cannot decieve the all-seeing eye which I clearly perceive observing every single event, from the movement of an atom to the motions of gigantic stars every moment of time.

Long study has convinced me that from the time I started to meditate to this day, the whole chain of events in my life has not been an accident, but the predetermined course of my life to have firsthand experience of the process and firsthand knowledge of the Law that rules this process, designed by nature to enhance the cognitive powers of the human brain. The areas where these processes occur are so subtle that it is still not possible for modern science to identify or to understand their working. For any observant intellect, it should be easy to grasp that there must be a level in the neuronic structure of our brains where abstract thought and the material constituents of the neurons meet together. It is precisely at these levels that changes take place to provide the biological groundwork for the manifestation of an illuminated mind.

This whole period of life has been a period of Revelation for me. I have been admonished, pulled by ears and buffeted by nature, like a child, at every step of the pilgrimage to keep me on the path, and to initiate me into the mysteries of the new knowledge. Time after time I erred, blundered, failed to co-operate or to learn,

doubted, questioned and rebelled. But every time, by a Grace, I have no words to express, I was led by the hand back to the path and again instructed and taught until slowly I learned the hard lesson which the skeptical climate of our time made it harder for me to grasp.

9

THE KINGDOM TO COME

I know the time for the discovery of this law has come. I know that Revelation has been right in predicting a glorious spiritual destiny for mankind and Reason has been grievously wrong. The marvels of technology we see around, beyond a certain limit that has passed, can become a prison for the evolving human mind. The Western world is virtually living in this self-constructed lock-up at this time. The contagion is travelling to the developing countries also. The day is not distant, when they, too, will construct the same gilded prisons to incarcerate their souls. Can anyone suggest a way out of the impasse that has been created? Can anyone dare suggest that the Guardian Forces of Evolution are already at work to demolish this alluring prison-house to free the fettered multitudes? A statement of this kind would appear sheer gibberish to sedate and scholarly Reason — the raving of a disordered imagination. But the

position is transparently clear to illuminated consciousness.

It has become imperative that this unplanned, disastrous advance of science should be arrested. The world situation will change rapidly to bring about this result. It is in such grave crises that Revelation comes to correct the errors and extravagances of the Intellect. I wonder at my own temerity in flinging an intellectual challenge to the world of science, but I do so unhesitatingly as, for me, the law already stands proved. It may take science years to discover and confirm the law, but this discovery and confirmation are as sure to follow the Revelations I am making as day follows the night. I would only wish that not a moment were lost in pooling the resources of science to confirm this important discovery. The reason is that the delay that has already occurred due to neglect has created a mental climate that can prove hazardous for mankind.

It should not be construed from the ideas I am expressing that I claim to have been the recipient of any special favour from Providence. The universe is ruled by immutable laws. In our short stay on the earth, we are never able to form a picture of the colossal time-spans and the uncomputable number of planets in space which form the widely scattered Theatres for the Cosmic Play of Eternal Consciousness. Our souls are like solar beams which irradiate the planets, orbiting around the sun, appearing and disappearing with the movement of each globe. The scattered beams of the Unbounded Sun of

Life play their parts everywhere in the vast Amphitheatre of space through all the time the drama lasts.

Like matter mind, too, is bound by Law. Every human being is ordained, for a pre-allotted role. Our actions are free and determined both. It is how you look at them with the eye of Reason. Both free will and predetermination come from the same Eternal Source. This is simple to understand. Every thought we think, every idea we frame, every decision we take and every theory we form comes from the Oceanic Reservoir of Mind. There is no Other Source of Thought. Just as all light comes from the sun and all our bodies from the earth, in the same way all our thoughts come from the inexhaustible Store of the Cosmic Mind. The thoughts we think of by our own free will or which we are led to think both arrive from the same Ocean.

The whole drama of life on the earth is conducted by the collective consciousness of the human race. The appearance of the illuminated founders of great faith, mystics, sages, geniuses in art, philosophy and science, as also of revolutionaries and reformers has been an important feature of the earthly drama to help in the evolution of the human mind from stage to stage. The prophets, mystics, sages and the geniuses have been the pioneers who blazed new paths in the trackless expanse of the human world for other members of the caravan to follow. No scholar, no philosopher and no scientist was ever able to point out the precise direction in which

mankind has to travel to reach her destination.

Even in this age of advanced knowledge the learned have absolutely no awareness of the purpose of life or the goal in front of mankind. They make plans and proposals in the light of their experience or on an image of the future built on the notions of the present, but they have actually no clear idea of what is to come. All that they can envisage of the future is, often, a transmogrified present, maybe, more advanced in technology, knowledge, philosophical speculation, art and science. But they have no awareness that the human brain itself is evolving to carry the whole race in a predetermined direction to reach a summit beyond our thought at present. Our intellect is helpless in solving a problem of this nature. The future is as completely hidden from it as the other side of the moon.

This attempt of Reason to dominate the area of faith during the last about 200 years has been disastrous. It has not been a battle between Science and the Church, but between Prejudice and Truth. The piles of books written by renowned authors to discredit faith in the eyes of the world has been a wasted effort in view of the widespread anarchy in thought that it has created. The simple mind needs an anchor to hold it firm in the midst of ceaseless clash and conflict of views. The ideals of religion provide this stabilizing force. What was needed was to prune the overgrown branches and not to uproot the whole tree.

There has been absolutely no awareness among the learned about the real factor behind illuminative religious experience and genius — the two most remarkable and productive states of the human mind. In the absence of knowledge of the real cause, only two alternatives were open to them to interpret the phenomena: (1) that both these conditions stem from a peculiar or abnormal condition of the brain and, (2) that they are the outcome of certain types of behaviour, e.g. the suppression of the sex-urge, childhood fixations, etc., or, in the case of visionaries, the result of extreme deprivation, solitude, self-mortification, and the like. The abnormalities of genius and eccentricities of mystics seemed to lend support to these views. But when we consider the wealth of achievements that has resulted from the labour of these two classes the explanations, rendered so far, for the phenomena are outrageous. They are, to be frank, somewhat similar to the diagnoses of diseases made by quack-healers in medieval times. They ascribed them to the Devil, black-magic, malignant spirits, potions, charms, ghosts, and the rest, to account for hysteria, possession and even purely somatic diseases. Their medicines and cures, too, corresponded to the diagnoses they had made.

If the learned knew that the visions of the mystic and the creations of genius proceed from an altered activity of the brain, beyond anything known to science at present, they would have shown more sobriety in their assessments. They have no idea that the network of nerves,

covering the reproductive organs, and reaching to every part and organ of the body, is a veritable magazine of dynamite-like explosive psychic force. Only a part of this powerful energy is used by nature to cause the burning ardency of carnal love which keeps the mind in fever with passion and longing throughout one's life. Almost all of us, at least once in life, experience the imperious, soul-ravishing power of love, when it usurps all the attention and imagination of the lover, and makes him appear like a lunatic in his behaviour, absorbed day and night in the thoughts of the beloved.

How the mechanism works we have still to find by experiment. But there is not the least shadow of doubt that an upheaval, far more intense than the revolution caused by carnal love, occurs in the mind, when the same explosive energy changes its direction and, instead of pressing on the procreative centres, directs its power on the budding spiritual center in the brain, namely, Brahma-rendra or the Cavity of Brahma, according to the Indian adepts. The explosion caused in the mind by a powerful upward thrust of the force is indescribable. The elevation, the rapture and the passion experienced leave the transport and passion experienced in carnal love far, far behind. A new world of life, ecstacy, beauty and joy opens up before the inner eye of the blessed recipient of the Grace. It is for this reason that no amount of public opprobrium, ostracism, contempt or ridicule nor any degree of pressure or persecution of the church could

influence the behaviour or change the course of conduct of mystics or make them give up what was the greatest treasure of their life. The whole personality of the mystic is transformed and he dwells, during the period of his ecstacy, in a world of light, love and joy of which the normal human beings have only a faint, momentary taste during the highest climax of carnal love. A mystic's being is saturated with a bliss which makes his whole life an earnestly wished for dream realized.

Another analogy by which we can dimly grasp the radical change in the perception, personality, passion and behaviour of the mystic is provided by the lunatic in a state of delirium. Does one in this state care in the least for the opinion of the, sometimes, outraged onlookers? Do their abuses, protests or exhortations abate his fervour? Does he listen to reason or is he, for the moment, amenable to the control, or attentive to the norms of behaviour of other human beings? He is completely lost in an inner upheaval so over-powering that it is not possible for him to resist and so over-whelming that he is lost both to reason and judgment. We call him mad because his critical and rational faculties are both swept away by the torrent that floods his mind.

The deliriums of the insane, their periods of frenzy and comparative calm, their utter absorption in the inner world and alienation from the outer, their neglect of themselves and apathy towards all other areas of life should provide us with a clue to understand the almost

parallel behaviour of the entranced mystic and creative genius. They, too, remain more absorbed in the inner than the outer world. They, too, show disregard of the opinions of others, live detached from the pulls and pressures of normal life, have spells of ecstacy or creativity followed by intervals of gloomy darkness or morose infertility. They, too, often refuse to adapt themselves to the values and norms of behaviour of average human beings. This is the reason why, from the normal point of view, the stigma of eccentricity and madness has often been attached to them.

We are surrounded by consciousness as marine creatures are surrounded by the waters of the ocean. We are not able to perceive this ocean, because our senses are oriented to interpret it as the colossal universe which staggers us by its duration and size. In this boundless Ocean of Being, there might well be countless pools and lagoons corresponding to the billions of suns, planets, and galaxies spread across the firmament. The universe of consciousness is not something we can imagine with our puny imagination or intellect. Its infinite proportions, its majesty, its grandeur, its sublimity and its power can be apprehended only in an infinitesimal degree in Turiya or the highest state of mystical ecstacy. There is no other way for man to have a glimpse of this Stupendous Ocean of which he is a drop, of this Cosmic Sun of which he is a slender beam, or of this Unbounded Fire of which he is but a spark.

It is the collective consciousness of the race or, to be more precise, the terrestrial plane of consciousness which is behind all the phenomena of life on earth. Consciousness pervades every atom of matter on the earth, penetrates to every atom of the ocean of fire dwelling in her interior, and stretches beyond her up to infinity. What consciousness is like when perceived in her glory as the Queen of Creation and the Architect of the Universe only mystical ecstacy can reveal. Reason in man is as incapable of framing a picture of Consciousness, as it reveals itself to the mystic, as a miner working in the bowels of the earth is incapable of framing a picture of the firmament, as it looks to the eyes of an astronomer. In the case of the miner, the possibility exists that, with proper study and education, he can, in course of time, gain the ability of a star-gazer to read the sky. But in the case of Reason, it is not possible by any amount of logic or rational thinking to gain the power of perception where the Ocean of Consciousness opens before one's eyes like the beautiful panorama of the star-spangled sky on a clear, cloudless night.

The fault with Reason is that it lends substance to Multiplicity, which it perceives through the senses, and tries to answer the Riddle of Existence with logic. It is, therfore, rather the cause of bondage, for it distracts the attention of the soul and, by its very nature, can never be an instrument of liberation. In its present form, therefore,

science provides no loophole for man to rise above the mind-bewildering multiplicity of the phenomenal world. It is for this that religion becomes an alien subject, and the amazing psychic phenomena an unbelievable collection of data, because neither of them fits in with its preconceived ideas about the objective world. Reason, unless forced to do so, by the mounting pressure of unshakeable evidence, can never believe that, with a shift in the fabric of consciousness, the multiplicity of the objective world disappears into a Unity which staggers the observer. It is in this state the Revelation supersedes the Intellect.

The only inference that can be drawn from the unanimous verdict of all great mystics in history is that the universe we see is the result of perception in a certain plane of consciousness, which is common to human beings. In other words, our visible universe owes its existence to the magic of our brains and the senses which feed it. Apart from the image, presented by our brains, we can form no concept of it all. By some alchemy, which we cannot grasp at present, one Eternal, Homogeneous Substance, beyond space, time and causality, becomes the observer in the form of a human soul as also the observed universe perceived through the senses. In the mystical ecstacy, the inner and outer realities become a Unity, the knower and the known fuse into one. This Mysterious Substance is the Maya or Shakti of the

Indian savants, the bewildering, inscrutable Power of the Creator, which no mind can understand and no language describe.

The state of consciousness, which ravishes the mind of the mystic and over-awes him with the immensity and majesty displayed, is destined to be the normal endowment of every human being in the ages to come. This is the sublime consciousness that shall be added to reason to make human beings cognizant of their devine heritage. There is little possibility that reason will reconcile itself to this view of human life, until prolonged experimentation and the results obtained therefrom compel it to do so. The idea of a glorious consciousness with a power of intuitive knowledge, not arrived at through Reason, cannot be acceptable to it for, by its very nature, it depends on logic and analysis for its conclusions. It is for this reason that the learned often prefer to believe that mystical ecstacy, represents an altered state of awareness, akin to those induced by drugs, than to admit that a radical change in consciousness itself is possible due to organic evolution of the brain.

My whole being is saturated with the ideas of the future. At times, it seems to me as if I am transported to a future age on this planet, and made, with rapt eyes, to behold a transfigured humanity — a race of stately men and women, with beautiful faces and graceful, sinewy forms, reminiscent of Michelangelo and some other

great, medieval painters, dwelling in lovely, idyllic surroundings, radiant with love and joy, passing their days in harmony, peace and happiness we cannot conceive of except for the denizens of Paradise. I see a noble, adventure-loving, virile race, far, far in advance in the knowledge of every art and science, whose area of exploration is the Universe, with a mind immersed in the stream of ecstatic Joy welling up within.

Reason has had its day. The world it has created is before our eyes. Due mainly to the skeptical climate, prevailing in academies and other centers of learning, the last two centuries, except for an extremely few notable exceptions, have been singularly barren of the illuminated mind. The outcome has been that Reason, unguided and unrestrained, has brought the human world to the brink of an Abyss, where one mistaken step in statesmanship, among the leading politicians of the world, or one accident can cause extinction of mankind. The great advocates of Reason even now fail in their duty to warn the race of this grave danger because, again, the future is hidden from their eyes. If they could foresee the state to which mankind would be driven, before the end of the century, they would shriek with horror at the nightmare.

I wish that every breath I draw were to be spent in the effort to paint the picture of the glorious destination for which mankind is bound — a state of glory and happiness of which but a fraction intoxicated the great mystics and

sages of the past to an extent that it became the greatest passion of their lives. It is this interpretation of the historical phenomenon of prophethood and genius pointing to the glorious Kingdom awaiting the race that has been Revealed to me in meticulous detail both through the transformation wrought in my own mind and the organic upheavals that occurred in my mortal frame. Therefore, it is not a theory I am expounding nor a conjecture I am making nor even a Vision I am presenting to the world, but a concrete reality made actual step by step through an organic transformative process that has continued for more than 40 years.

There is not the least doubt in my mind the the Message will be heard and acted upon, that what is Revealed to me will come to pass, and that humanity will survive the present grave crisis to build a beautiful world of human brotherhood, love, abundance, peace, harmony and joy.

I also know that the incredible possibilities inherent in the Power behind mystical ecstacy and genius will, in course of time, supplant the present-day incentives of Wealth and Power to spur the brilliant intellects of the age to heroic efforts more effectively than has ever happened before. Millions will eagerly take to the discipline needed to arouse the Power and, in this way, try to make their lives sublime. The risk of mishaps will diminish day by day as more and more knowledge is

gained of this Reservoir of Psychic-Energy. A new class of human beings, combining the knowledge and art of the genius with the love and intuition of the ecstatic, will come into being and increase in numbers year by year to guide mankind in every sphere of thought and activity. It is this lofty class of Enlightened Savants which shall slowly lead the race to the Pinnacle of Glory destined for her.

THE END

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